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THE ADVENTURES OF A CAVALCADE OF BRITISH NAVAL OFFICERS IN THE HOLY LAND

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OUR ARAB GUARD. *Frontispiece*

THE MIDSHIPMEN'S TRIP

TO

JERUSALEM

AND CRUISE IN SYRIA

OR

THE ADVENTURES OF A CAVALCADE OF BRITISH NAVAL OFFICERS IN THE HOLY LAND

BY

AUGUSTUS A. LYNE, R.N.

SECOND EDITION

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1872

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TO

CAPTAIN GEORGE LETHBRIDGE, R.N.

AND THE

OFFICERS OF H.M.S. 'TRAFALGAR'

PREFACE.

My dear Brother Officers,

I feel I need offer no apology in presenting you with the following pages, although I am fully aware their humble pretensions would cut a very poor figure under the pen of a Reviewer. However I can trust to you to remember, when criticising my book, that my only excuse for the many delinquencies to be found in it, is in the simple fact of its having been somewhat hurriedly written during our rather lengthy voyage from Syria to England. It will easily be understood how little suited is a Man-of-war for any attempt at authorship (to which of course I cannot pretend), as a quiet spot can scarcely ever be found, especially in my situation, without a cabin to retire to where I could obtain the solitude absolutely necessary for my undertaking. Early in the morning and late at night were the only quiet half-hours free of interruption, although of course I was able to snatch other periods when not

required for my naval duties. I well know that the ground our cavalcade travelled over has every inch of it been trodden by far abler men than myself—men whose pens have done full justice to spots fraught with such deep interest. Nevertheless our story, 'The Midshipmen's Trip to Jerusalem and Cruise in Syria,' is a new one from the circumstance of its comprising the adventures of so large a body, viz. eighty-three British Midshipmen and other Naval Officers. So, may I trust that those who will do me the honour of reading my book will not find it entirely devoid of all interest.

Your faithful friend and fellow-traveller,

AUG. A. LYNE, R.N.

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PART I.

THE CRUISE IN SYRIA OF THE MIDSHIPMEN BELONGING TO H.M. TRAINING SHIP 'TRAFALGAR.'

CHAPTER I.

ARRIVAL AT JAFFA.

THE notes which I propose to make being entirely from memory, I cannot pretend to give every small particular with perfect accuracy; therefore I should wish it to be understood that, where various times or periods are stated, they are only near about correct estimates.

We sailed from England on November 1, 1870, for Madeira, where we remained ten or eleven days. From Madeira we went to the Canary Isles, remaining a short time at Teneriffe, and then sailed to Gibraltar, where our captain, who had communicated with the Admiralty at Madeira, proposing that the ship should be permitted to visit Syria, and thus enable the 'young gentlemen' to see Jerusalem and other places in the Holy Land, received to his proposition the following orders in December 1870: 'To proceed to Mahon, from thence to Algiers, and sailing eastward to Sicily, calling at Palermo and any other Sicilian port, reaching Malta the end of February, and sail for Crete (Suda Bay) first week in March, from thence proceeding to Cyprus (Larnaca Bay), reaching Syria by the first week in April, calling at Beyrout and other Syrian ports, leaving the coast of Syria by the first week in May, and proceed to England, calling at Malta and Gibraltar. At Malta orders would be sent as to what port in England the ship was to arrive.'

This programme for the most part has now been com-

pleted, although circumstances have caused some alterations in it; for instance, at Malta there was at the time of our visit small-pox very prevalent, and, a case breaking out on board, we were ordered to cruise for fourteen days off the port before proceeding on our voyage. Owing to this delay, we sailed direct for Jaffa, instead of touching at Crete and Cyprus.

We finally sailed from Malta in H.M.S. *Trafalgar* on March 21, not reaching Jaffa until the evening of April 7—Good Friday. The passage was thus long, owing to calms and adverse winds, the whole distance being performed under canvas.

When at last, after several months of waiting and longing to see the Holy Land, it came in sight—the land sanctified by God—it appeared like a distant cloud resting on the far-off horizon. I felt much impressed; my eyes had actually rested on its shores. It was there where the scenes of Holy Writ had taken place. Hour after hour passed, and the ship slowly glided on towards her haven. The wind was light, but fair. It presently increased, the sails bulged, the ropes strained, and the ship plunged onward, casting the waves impatiently from her bows as if sharing our own anxiety. On, on she went; the coast opened out, Jaffa was in sight. Numbers of telescopes were pointed towards the city. 'Hands bring ship to an anchor,' was soon now the order, followed by 'Shorten sail.' This was done with true man-of-war-like smartness, the ship's mad career was quickly checked, and she crept gently up to her anchorage. The anchor was dropped, and all was soon secure in the open roadstead off Jaffa.

The accounts I have read of Jaffa I have found to be generally correct. It rises on a hill sloping upwards from the sea. The distant view is more pleasant than a close one. Its streets are narrow, ill-paved, and dirty, while the pervading smell of the city is not of the most agreeable.

Landing is often dangerous; the passage from the sea is between a ledge of rocks. The swell is frequently considerable, and the breaking of the surf liable to capsize boats.

The places of interest here are very few—simply because it seems impossible that any of ancient Jaffa could have been preserved. Truly, Jaffa *is* one of the oldest cities in the world, but only by name, for its history may be said to be literally written in blood, so often has it been levelled to the ground; but most perseveringly it has again and again sprung up from its own ruins. The present age of the city cannot be much over 140 years. I have walked through its streets and bazaars, and was impressed with the great filth of the people. The water-gate leading into the town seems to be *the* place of meeting for discussions on various important subjects.

From the port of Jaffa Noah is said to have launched the ark, and it was down here that Jonah came to find a ship to flee from the presence of the Lord, and from thence sailed to Tarshish (Jonah i. 3). On the southern side is the quarantine, and here is a skeleton of an enormous fish, *said to be* the identical whale that swallowed Jonah. I think that nobody will doubt but that a large fish was prepared by a miracle for the occasion; for whales are unknown in the Mediterranean, and we are not justified in believing that they ever frequented this sea, although some affirm that it is likely they did, but that the gradual increase of shipping drove them away. We have, however, no data for anything of the kind. I would therefore leave it for others to settle in their own minds the knotty question as to whether the skeleton of the whale shown here is what it is supposed to be, remembering that the extent of a whale's life is unknown. Consequently, the one under discussion may possibly have been found centuries after the event alluded to.

Of course I went to see the house of Simon the Tanner, although I am very sceptical as to its genuineness. It seemed to me far too modern. It is a fine roomy house, with an entrance hall. Well, it is quite possible that Simon was a well-to-do man, and that his business of tanning was a very lucrative one. There are, I understand, tanneries still here, outside the town, where I suppose they were at the time of St. Peter, for it would be unwholesome to have them *in* the town. I also understand there are extensive soap factories here, as well as potteries. One is inclined to wonder what can become of all the soap; it is certainly used very sparingly or not at all, I should say, by the inhabitants, to judge from their universally unwashed appearance.

The touching story of Dorcas, I dare say, will be well remembered. The death of this charitable person, and the sending to Lydda, some ten or twelve miles distant, to St. Peter, who came at once and raised her to life (Acts ix. 35–43); and his stopping at the house of one Simon the Tanner, which is by the sea, and having the vision on the house top—the whole story must be fresh in our memories. I remained for a short time with my companions on the very house-top where this vision is *supposed* to have been. The tomb of Dorcas is pointed out near the gate, but I confess my faith was not sufficiently strong to pay it a visit.

The best part of Jaffa is the very beautiful and extensive orange groves, which apparently cover several miles, shedding their delicious perfume far and near. Indeed, every morning the sweet scent of the blossom with which they were loaded (as well as fruit) was wafted over the sea to the ship, anchored more than a mile distant, penetrating even her lowest decks. We spent a portion of one afternoon in these fragrant groves, and feasted off the oranges, some of which were of an enormous size, and indeed beyond anything of the kind I had ever seen.

The first time I landed in Jaffa I noticed the peculiar way the women have of riding on horseback, their style being exactly the same as followed by the men, the side-saddle being altogether despised; and this is the custom throughout Syria with the natives, but side-saddles are provided for European ladies.

PREPARATIONS FOR STARTING TO JERUSALEM.

The evening following that of our arrival at Jaffa a party of sixteen of the officers started off for Jerusalem, intending to make the journey by night. The distance from Jaffa is called thirty-six miles, but I should be inclined to think, from experience, it cannot be far short of thirty-eight or forty. I was myself very anxious if possible to be in the Holy City on Easter-Day; but I felt that I was not equal to undertake the night journey, and from after consequences was very glad I did not attempt it. Next day accounts of a very discouraging nature reached us respecting our shipmates. Their start had been much delayed, owing to a disappointment in horses, and they did not get away from Jaffa until ten o'clock at night. The next intelligence that reached us was brought direct from Jerusalem. Our friends had been seen entering the city some time during the forenoon of Sunday (Easter-day), both horses and men much knocked up; some of the party were dismounted, dragging after them their jaded, woebegone steeds. One horse had died on the road, and two died afterwards.

Subsequent to this intelligence, a letter arrived from Lieutenant P——, one of the travellers, giving a woeful description of the journey, and mentioning that two of his companions were very much done up. Still later news informed us that they had started for the Dead Sea and Jordan, but that two out of the number had given in and returned to Jerusalem. All this, of course, was far from

cheering as regards the undertaking before us, especially, with such a large number of mere boys that were to be in our party. The journey is no such wonderful undertaking when performed in the usual way by travellers, and encamping a night on the road; but to do the whole distance right off the reel in one forced march, is certainly an undertaking, and our shipmates doing it without their usual night's rest suffered far more than they otherwise would. One of the senior officers who had suffered considerably was thinking of writing to the captain to prevent the young midshipmen and cadets going the journey. Forced and heavy marches would have to be done, as time was short and limited. However we, undaunted, did not draw back at the ugly picture presented to us. *All, all* were ready to undertake the journey—even those who were partially invalids, were willing to *try* and reach the Holy City, even should they fall by the way.

Let me now relate our story, as simply and as plainly as I can—I am no writer and cannot put together choice sentences or pen flowery language. If I make a jumble of my descriptions please, dear reader, excuse and forgive me. Before I begin, I know, I feel incompetent to undertake the task before me. But I wish, oh yes, I wish to transcribe, and leave in writing some kind of description of the scenes and the holy places we visited. I well know how often the ground I am about, in imagination, to retraverse, has been travelled over by learned men—men well and fully able to give every information, both scriptural and otherwise, of the holy places. It is in all modesty that I take up my pen to write about what has been so ably exhausted long ere this. I am going to reveal nothing new; all I hope to do is to relate our own story in my own simple, humble way. I shall often call to my assistance authors of weight; I shall often quote from their knowledge and far superior intelligence during our travels. I have read and re-read from them, and

without having first studied their works, I could not pretend to make my little story even worth perusal. As it is, with previous careful reading, I trust it will not be found without some merits; but even those merits I must not take to myself, for they are borrowed.

This little book is more particularly intended for my young companions, the midshipmen and Naval cadets, as well as my other fellow-travellers. I am, I believe, the only one of our large party who has taken upon himself to commit to writing journeyings that will be for ever memorable during the rest of our lives, and would that I were more fitted for the task.

Week after week and month after month did many of my young shipmates meet together, once or twice a week, to listen to my relations of what I knew from study of the holy spots we were about to visit; all first joining in prayer and praise to Him, our gracious, good, kind, and loving Lord for whom we desired to live. The many hours we spent together, may I trust, were not without fruit, and helped to add to our intense interest when we actually visited those holy places we had discussed. However, I must to my story; I have much to write, much to relate, and must hurry on.

The head dragoman who undertook the conducting of the whole affair, rejoiced in the name of Hurman, assisted by a second dragoman named Floyd, an American; the head guide was named Paul. Much credit is due to these three men for the general arrangements and the way they carried us through everything.

The cost to each of us was to be £1 a day, and an advance of about £350 had to be paid beforehand. Our whole number amounted to eighty-three, and included the commander and servant, chaplain, staff surgeon, one assistant surgeon, one lieutenant, one assistant paymaster, two engineers, one captain of marines, one French in-

structor, one naval instructor, and the remainder cadets and midshipmen. So large a party going up to the Holy City had not been known for some years.

The day fixed for starting was the next Thursday, so as to enable the necessary arrangements to be made, which now commenced in real downright earnest. On Tuesday, I think it was, forty-five camels left with tents and baggage for Jerusalem. Our own baggage went forward on Wednesday. How the hours seemed to lag before Thursday came, and how intensely many of us longed for the great event of our lives to come, and see the Holy City; and how we feared that *something* might prevent our going; indeed we were quite worried. The eve of starting came. Orders were given for breakfast at 3.45 A.M. The morning arrived—moonlight but cloudy, with a little rain occasionally. The landing was performed in the dark, pretty successfully. One midshipman only got wet, and he fell into the sea while getting from the boat to the shore; but an hour's riding or so put him pretty well to rights. Most of us landed on the bluejackets' backs.

CHAPTER II.

THE START. JOURNEYING FROM JAFFA TO RAMLEH AND TO THE HILL COUNTRY OF JUDÆA.

THE morning was cold and dark, with now and then a peep of moonlight; it rained while we were going on shore. However, all were in excellent spirits and did not intend to permit a few drops of rain to damp our ardour.

The streets of Jaffa were shrouded in deep gloom as we wended our way towards the ground where our horses awaited us, and we had to keep a bright look out as an occasional loaded camel tramped by, threatening to brush us off our feet, did we not politely step on one side.

Dawn began to break and shed its pale lustre around. We had reached the first and large troop of horses; those for ourselves, the senior officers, forming a separate group, were standing outside the American hotel about a quarter of a mile distant.

Considerable time was occupied in preparing and securing saddle bags, &c., and our gallant captain of marines was no sooner mounted than both horse and rider came to the ground, but fortunately without injury to either. Most of us were in the saddle by about 5·30 A.M., but there were still delays. The chaplain's horse became restive, and another animal was lame; both had to be changed. By 6 A.M. we began to file away through the town, mustering in all about one hundred mounts, including dragomans, servants, and muleteers. We passed in review before our captain, who had landed to see us off. With a kind good morning and wishing us a pleasant journey he saw us all ride off towards Jerusalem. He doubtless would have made one of our party, had he not on a former occasion traversed the same ground we were bound for.

And now we were actually at last moving along the Jerusalem road towards the Holy City. The head dragoman Hurman led the way mounted on a pretty grey, while the two others looked after the wants of the cavalcade, one bringing up the rear. I had a good 'going' horse but considerably given to kicking and tossing his head, which latter propensity kept me in the fear of having a few of my teeth loosened. I was the first to be left behind, and require the assistance of the dragoman in the rear; it was in consequence of my saddle bags getting adrift. This I had not observed, so that various articles had jumped out and remained strewed along the road, but fortunately were mostly seen and picked up by the dragoman. Amongst the property were writing materials, and partially written letters to be completed in Jerusalem. These I luckily did

not lose. The mishap was occasioned by my saddle not being fitted for bags, and the temporary arrangement for them becoming displaced. I was obliged to pull up and hand the troublesome bags to the dragoman, who in his turn gave them to a muleteer. This delay of course left me a considerable distance behind the main body, as well as the last of the straggling tail of the cavalcade, and I had a hard ride to catch them up, which I did, as they commenced to enter upon the Plains of Sharon.

The early morning was fresh and balmy; all seemed to be in high spirits and enjoying the novelty of the scene. Occasionally a dragoman or guide would sweep past the whole length of the cavalcade at a full tearing gallop, his light flowing muslin robe floating and quivering in the morning breeze. The head dragoman ambled on ahead, having constantly to give the necessary directions to the more eager midshipman, 'No body shall go on in front.' By 7 A.M. we were well on the plains, carpeted with waving crops of grain on either hand, and quantities of early summer wild flowers. The morning, however, was not as bright as might have been wished, and rainy-looking clouds passed over our heads. The present was the time for the 'latter rain,' which sometimes falls in exceedingly heavy showers, as we had good cause for knowing before another hour had gone by. Indeed, we had such a dose of 'latter rain' as we shall not soon forget. Many of us were dressed in light costumes, expecting a warm day and not looking for rain. By and by a thick and heavy cloud arose over the southern part of the plains of Sharon. About this time we were passing the spot, according to our guide, where Samson let loose the foxes with burning brands amongst the crops of corn, 'white and ready to harvest.' How easily one might imagine what fearful destruction was likely to accrue by such an act, when the crops for miles around were parched by a burning Syrian

sun, and were 'white to harvest.' Now then for a dose of the 'latter rain;' down, down it came pouring thick and heavily, and soon many of us were drenched. I, for one, was far from coming off scot free. I wore a light holland coat, which soon lost its original colour, and the starch its stiffness. Down, down rattled the rain in fine style; not a tree, not a bush, nor any kind of place of shelter presented itself. Some few had macintoshes, but they were very few and far between. I possessed a good substantial rug of skins, but it was in charge of a muleteer, and to look about for him in the company was something like searching for a needle in a bundle of hay. Under my light holland coat I fortunately had another light flannel one, and before I was actually drenched to the skin, I observed one of the muleteers with coats and rugs stuffed into his roomy sacks, but mine was not there, so I borrowed one forthwith. As the rain poured down in torrents, many anxious eyes kept peering up to windward hoping for a break in the clouds, while several sat their horses with as apparent composure as if nothing particular were 'in the wind,' and did not seem to care one bit for the shower bath with all their clothes on. For a long time the rain fell heavily, but at last the welcome break appeared, and the beautiful and warm bright sun shone forth and commenced with its hot rays to rectify the harm done.

The first halt was after about three hours' riding, when we reached Ramleh—said to be, by good authority, Arimathea. It certainly has a very ancient appearance, and it would be extremely difficult to guess its age, or judge of its antiquity from the ruins. There is a fine view obtainable from the top of the old tower; let me recommend travellers not to miss it. A brief halt of ten minutes was called here, and pretty 'considerable' glad were some of us to slip out of our saddles, more especially those who had not been, as sailors say, 'on the outside' of a horse for

years. Yes, the little rest was welcome after three hours on horseback, and besides, hunger began to make itself felt. We had breakfasted at or before 4 A.M., and it was now 9·30 A.M., but another three hours' ride intervened between this and the next halt where we were to lunch, which was to be at the extremity of the plains, and the first commencement of the hill country of Judæa. The ancient and ruinous town of Ramleh is said to contain about 3,400 inhabitants, a greater portion of whom are Christians, than in any other town in the plain.

Our ten minutes up, the commander 'sounded to horse' with a fog horn he had brought from the ship, and carried slung over his shoulder. 'Mount! Mount!' was called out by the dragomans, but many had the business of catching their horses to go through, consequently the van was far in advance before the rear was in the saddle; however whip and spur soon brought them up.

My horse, as I have mentioned, was much given to kicking and tossing his head. He was a nice-looking animal, but, not being much accustomed to riding, when he occasionally struck out behind at something, either real or imaginary, I confess I felt pretty shaky in the saddle; so I determined at the next halt, if I managed to reach so far without coming to grief, to part with my savage friend. As we rode on hour after hour, the plains altered but little in appearance. All around seemed a sea of verdure and early summer flowers, and indeed some parts were so beautiful, that they seemed laid out as for a gentleman's park. The present was the very best time of the year to see them in perfection; later on in the season doubtless all would be parched up, withered, and dried by a burning sun. The traffic and passengers we passed coming from Jerusalem did not come up to what I imagined it would be; it was only occasionally we met a few sleepy camels lazily wending their way towards Jaffa, with living and

other cargoes on their backs; the pace at which they travelled being left entirely to their own judgment, their masters never attempting to accelerate it. 'It's all in the commission' in sailor phrase, or in shore going epithet, 'There's no hurry,' seemed evidently *their* motto. I think I have read somewhere, that there is a daily communication with Jerusalem of 800 camels; should this be a fact, I feel pretty convinced there is not half that number that communicate with its seaport Jaffa.

The sun was hot, the day advancing, the ride was becoming tedious, and we—excuse the vulgarity—were 'losing leather,' when suddenly shots were heard being fired in the van and we saw some of the headmost party dash from the beaten track and gallop on to the plains. I at first thought some Arabs might possibly be trying on a little game, so looked to my pistol. The reality of the case was that some gazelles had been seen bounding over the heather; a few revolver shots were sent whizzing after them but they soon vanished like ghosts.

The 12 o'clock halt for lunch was not now very far distant, and glad we were to dismount when the time arrived; some lying down full length and others in other positions, only too glad to get a little relief after six hours in the saddle. For, be it remembered, we were unaccustomed to such exercise, and had been cooped up on board ship for some lengthened time previously; therefore, it could not be otherwise than expected that such an undertaking would tell somewhat on our strength.

The best horses, of course, were first in; the stragglers of the cavalcade contined to arrive for about half an hour. We all sat down upon the grass and had each a paper packet presented to us, containing our lunch, which consisted of a large hunch of bread, a small piece of cheese, a little salt, and sundry square bits or chunks of meat, so exceedingly hard that we *could not* masticate them. What

this meat was seemed very doubtful, some said it was camel. I should say it was either that or rhinoceros; but whatever it was *I* could not eat it and had to satisfy myself with bread and cheese and some oranges. We needed nourishment, for, although we had accomplished perhaps a little over half the whole distance to the Holy City, still the toughest part of the journey was before us.

CHAPTER III.

CROSSING THE HILL COUNTRY.

About 1 p.m. the commander sounded 'to horse,' and the business of catching and finding horses had to be repeated; however, we soon began to file slowly on towards the hills. It was at this halt I changed my horse for another animal which I stuck to during the whole of our journeyings in Palestine. He also was not devoid of some of the propensities of my former friend, but I bore with him and he bore me.

The ascent of the hills was in some places gradual, and in others very steep. Our next halt was a short one of ten minutes at Kirjath-jearim, twelve miles from Jerusalem. This place is, I think, believed to be by some the Emmaus of the New Testament, and from my readings I am inclined to believe that it is so; at the same time I must not attempt to indulge in discussions in these pages, they would be out of place, and besides, I would far rather leave them to abler pens than my own, and all that I can pretend to do is to offer my humble opinion.

This old town possessed very great interest to me, contemplating it, as I did, as both the resting place of the Ark of the Tabernacle on its way to Jerusalem, where it remained for twenty years, and long afterwards the resting-place of our Lord as He journeyed from Jerusalem to

Galilee after His resurrection (Luke xxiv. 13-31). 'And behold two of them went that same day to a village called Emmaus, which was from Jerusalem *about* three-score furlongs.' A very long three-score furlongs, indeed, ninety-six furlongs by the beaten track we had to follow; but of course it is quite likely the disciples knew of a nearer and more direct way, which would be passable on foot but not on horseback.

A steep pathway from the main road brought us into the ruined town, down which I walked, leading my horse. The group of buildings huddled together occupy a considerable space, and once must have been a not insignificant town, or certainly a large village; it is now, to judge from its appearance, almost entirely deserted, for only now and then might be seen a solitary inhabitant lurking amongst the ancient and ruinous habitations.

The principal building was the ruin of what apparently had once been a synagogue, said to mark the spot occupied by the Ark for twenty years. How delightful even the contemplation, that perhaps this was really the Emmaus mentioned by St. Luke, and that by the same road, or certainly close to it, by which we were about to travel, our Lord met the two disciples also going the same way—men who had loved and did really love Him, but had in the hour of trial forsaken Him. Ah! dear forgiving Saviour, He bore no anger towards *them*, *He* knew they were but dust. He was apparently going on further, but the day was far spent and it was towards evening, so they constrained Him to abide with them, and He showed His love by accepting their invitation. It was, however, not until after He had broken bread with them and blessed it that their eyes were opened and they knew their Lord and Saviour. He vanished out of their sight and went to Galilee, where He performed the miracle of the fishes. He then appeared to the disciples in Jerusalem. 'And He

led them out as far as to Bethany, and He lifted up His hands and blessed them. And it came to pass, while He blessed them, He was parted from them and carried up into heaven.' So He, our Lord, *came* with a blessing and *went* with a blessing. The oft-repeated story is told, the story which never grows stale—how sweet to ponder over it—how *can* such a story ever weary or grow uninteresting? Many millions of books have been written and stories told since this happened, but still never was there such a one generated even from the most fertile and imaginative brain. But we can give no more time to delicious thought, we are called to mount, and we journey on towards Jerusalem. How can one help being quiet and thoughtful on such an occasion as this; how thoughts crowd the mind and hold the tongue still. O, my dear Lord, I do not love Thee enough, and I know I cannot love Thee here as I ought; but O, *do*, DO give me more love for Thee and soften this cold distracted heart.

The hill country of Judæa was tedious travelling, hill after hill had to be climbed. Some of the horses were showing signs of fatigue and straggled far behind. One or two fell and threw their riders; but the main body kept well up with the head dragoman, and he had constantly to restrain their ardour to push on. We passed the little village of St. John on our right, nestling in among the hills. It is so called after St. John the Baptist, and is thought to be the city alluded to in St. Luke, i. 39–41: 'And Mary arose in those days, and went into the hill country with haste, into a city of Judea, and entered into the house of Zacharias, and saluted Elisabeth. And it came to pass, that, when Elisabeth heard the salutation of Mary, the babe leaped in her womb; and Elisabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost.'

When the valley of Ajalon was reached another halt had to be called to allow stragglers to come up, and a long

time we had to wait, full of impatience, for the Holy City was drawing near, and there was a great longing for the 'first sight.' It was fully a quarter of an hour or twenty minutes before the main body approached, and one or two messengers had been sent forward to direct that no one should go forward. Close to where we stood holding our horses was a high and steep hill, from the summit of which we *expected* to see Jerusalem; many had forced their horses to climb the hill with this expectation, and a guide had to be sent forward at the gallop to restrain the midshipmen from going still further. We had plenty of time now to consider the great event of this place—the valley of Ajalon. How Joshua fought against the five kings and rescued Gibeon from them, and how God fought against them and slew them with great hailstones from heaven. 'Then spake Joshua to the Lord in the day when the Lord delivered up the Amorites before the children of Israel, and he said in the sight of Israel, Sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon; and thou, moon, in the valley of Ajalon'—and thus it was done until full vengeance was taken upon their enemies. 'And there was no day like that before it or after it, that the Lord hearkened unto the voice of man: for the Lord fought for Israel.'

At last the cavalcade were seen slowly advancing; we jumped into our saddles and moved on with them. The 'first sight' was not obtained from the top of the hill, and a considerable distance had yet to be traversed before our eyes were thus gladdened. On we moved in a compact body; every one seeming to endeavour to push his horse before the other. The head dragoman, as before, led the van on his pretty iron grey—he had much difficulty in restraining the more impatient, for the horses, in spite of the long journey, partook of their rider's impatience. Stragglers soon again began to drop behind, and before very long the road far in the rear was occupied by some

twenty, then thirty, forty, fifty. But still some thirty or forty kept huddled, almost wedged together, unwilling to give way an inch to the other. This pushing and striving for a foremost place must have lasted a considerable time—but at present we took no particular note of time—our expectations were on the stretch, all were eager and waiting for the few next minutes to pass when we should see Jerusalem. We had forgotten our fatigue, we reckoned not the time, but how we longed to see 'The City of the Great King,' and it was now to be shortly in sight.

Suddenly the head dragoman seemed to vanish; he had given his horse the rein and went forward at a dash. Away, away—rein, whip, and spur—away our horses plunged at a full tearing gallop; it was indeed a grand stampede. The hard road rang again with the clattering of their iron hoofs. Hear the shouts of the headmost, and the cry passes from mouth to mouth—*Jerusalem's in sight! Jerusalem's in sight!!* Away, away, we went at a racing gallop. 'Hip! hip! huru-a-a-y!' was the ringing cheer. I thought my horse would have been down, head over heels; I gathered in the reins, expecting a fall, but at the same time allowed them to hang loose on his neck and urged him forward at his utmost speed, heeding not the risk. Yes, I now saw the minarets of the Holy City; forward I galloped, with my uniform cap under my arm and head uncovered while I breathed a thanksgiving to Almighty God for permitting me to see Jerusalem, the City of the Great King—the Holy City. On, on we galloped, not drawing rein until reaching the encampment in the valley of Gihon.

Well, I suppose you will wish me to give you my impressions on first sight. I had read much about the dear, sacred city, and how disappointing the first view of it was from this approach. But although I came prepared, I was still disappointed. The first object that caught my sight

was a large Londony-fied building—something almost on the warehouse principle which I never expected to find here; what could it be? Was it the Armenian Convent? *that* was *inside* the walls, while *this* apparently was *without*. I had not read of anything of the kind being here. It turned out to be a large and recently erected Russian hospice—its object doubtless is most good and charitable, but it lamentably spoils 'the first view,' on account of its high and ugly walls shutting out all but a little bit near the Jaffa Gate. The view from the Jaffa road was always insignificant; but now the eye mostly rests on this ungainly looking Russian hospice, having much the appearance of a London manufactory. It is a sad pity. I was much disappointed at first, *but only at first.* Yes, *nearly* all feelings of disappointment vanished. I had come prepared and knew pretty well what I should see, as well as the nature of things in general. But I had wished to have approached the Holy City in a manner otherwise than we did. The helter-skelter gallop with which we dashed down the gentle incline into the valley of Gihon, was not the realisation of my—on *this* one occasion—poetical ideas of reaching the city of the Lord. This was not the fashion of pilgrims who had come from afar. Well might the natives stare with open mouths at the sight. However, any disappointment I may have experienced on the manner of our approach has since been quite obliterated, and my visit to Jerusalem has scarcely a shade to mar its sunshine, and I thank God the food for thought my mind then became laden with can only be exhausted with life. I will *try* and describe, as well as I can, an account of our three days' sojourn in the sacred and beloved city But our cold language and my own inability I feel and know will mar and spoil what I would write—the feelings I *would* describe as well as generate in the minds of my readers.

CHAPTER IV.

ARRIVAL AT JERUSALEM.

I was not the first to arrive, but was amongst the first; this was not my fault, for I did my utmost to urge my horse forward, but the fleeter horses passed mine. The scene of the encampment was a lively one; the tents were pitched between the upper and lower pools of Gihon, about 300 yards from the Jaffa gate.

As we rode down into the valley of Gihon, we dismounted within the boundary of the encampment, and resigned our horses to the Arab grooms who waited to receive them, and descended to the tents in the hollow.

The first thing to be done was to change one's road-stained garments and indulge in a refreshing wash. Everything was found prepared and ready. On tables in the open air outside the tents were ranged numbers of iron basins. These were quickly in use; as midshipman after midshipman kept galloping up, they threw aside their jackets, waistcoats, and even shirts, so as thoroughly to enjoy the cold water process. For my own part I found it far too cold, and became very chary how I parted with my clothing, for be it remembered we were some thousands of feet above the elevation of Jaffa, and it was really quite chilly after our hot gallop. Basins were quickly replenished as the midshipmen, &c., came pouring in, all anxious for a good wash. The encampment formed nearly a circle. In the centre was the dining tent, consisting of some five or six tents opening one into the other, with one long table. Dinner was ready almost as soon as we were—cloth and all the luxuries of the season spread. But for three quarters of an hour or so stragglers were coming in, and of course we waited until the whole party

had arrived, and which they did eventually safe and sound. The first bell rang, then the second. This operation was performed by a man walking about among the tents, bell in hand, sounding 'the tinkler,' for it had not a very mellow tongue. It must have been between seven and eight o'clock before we took our seats at the festive board; but more than one amongst our party were too much 'done up' to enjoy a meal; and one or two becoming unwell had to retire from the scene altogether. I, however, although sore, stiff, and very tired, managed to do justice to the good things.

As I was most anxious to be within the walls of the Holy City, I had made arrangements with the dragoman to sleep there instead of in the encampment.

The night was dark and inclined to be stormy. The change in the atmosphere up here, at an elevation of 2,800 feet, was very violent. During the day we had been scorched with heat, and I for one was now almost shivering with cold.

After dinner I, in company with a guide, wended my way to the Jaffa gate, which was closed, but a few words in Arabic from my companion caused them to be quickly opened. With uncovered head I passed through the portal and entered Jerusalem.

When within the gate, I reverently knelt on the sacred ground, and for a brief space of time gave myself up to prayer to Him who had sanctified this City, and died here for the sins of the whole world. My short prayer concluded, I rose from the broken stony road and followed my guide to the Mediterranean hotel, which was close at hand. At the hotel I met the first and smaller party; they had returned from the Dead Sea, Jordan, and Jericho, at least all but the two before-mentioned who had so dreaded the undertaking after their previous exertions, that they had remained in Jerusalem. One of the party I

found much indisposed, having unfortunately taken fever down at the Jordan.

This, with the exception of killing a horse or two, was their only casualty. Our own adventures were yet to come, and the business of relating them is before me.

Here I was then, truly and in reality in Jerusalem; the long ago dream realised—how strange it seemed; was it true, could it be real? My great weariness and painful fatigues seemed to assure me that it was a reality. Yes, it *did* seem strange when I came to date my half-finished letters from 'Jerusalem.' Before thinking of seeking repose, I wrote and prepared them for the post. I was very weary and my back ached, but I managed in a way to finish off each letter, and then I went straight to bed. I had brought with me a very necessary accompaniment for travelling in the Holy Land, namely, insect powder; but unfortunately this night I was too tired to use it. The consequence was, I got much bitten and passed a restless night. Everything in my room was exceedingly clean, but then I am so apt a subject for the attacks of bugs and fleas, that even at a distance they will find me out, and find me out they did, on this occasion.

In spite of the inferior night I had passed, and the great fatigue of the preceding day, I rose about 5.30 A.M., and found myself stiff to a painful degree.

Of course my first anxious object was to go to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, but it would not be opened until 7 o'clock; so I wended my way down David Street, took the first turning on the left, Christian Street, and went to the Turkish baths there. I was directed to undress almost in the open air, and had to leave all my clothes, with two purses, watch, chain, &c., to the mercy of the Arabs or Turks sitting around smoking, while I was led away into a warm room, and then into a still warmer room where operations were commenced. These over, I was

conveyed back and reclined on a lounge while coffee, lemonade, and a nargele were brought to me. An individual then assisted me to dress, and I found all my property safe. This bath occupied a considerable space of my valuable time, but I thought it about the best remedy I could have for my aching bones. Returning to the hotel, I exchanged some English money for Turkish. In copper I obtained about forty pieces for one shilling; these I found useful in distributing to beggars, swarms of whom in some places lined the thoroughfares and were most importunate. Outside the hotel I fell in with two of my companions from the encampment bound on the same errand as myself, namely, to visit the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. I accordingly turned and accompanied them.

CHAPTER V.

THE CHURCH OF THE HOLY SEPULCHRE.

Before entering upon a description of this holy edifice, perhaps I should give my views on certain points, so that what may hereafter be written may be understood.

First of all I must remark that I am very sceptical as regards many of the holy spots pointed out. The history of Jerusalem naturally makes one so. At the conclusion of the memorable and awful siege by Titus, the grand old city was levelled to the dust. It is just possible that many of the *minor* holy sites may have been preserved by the Christians up to the time of their flight; but I think it very doubtful, as well as improbable, that these *minor* sites could have been preserved after the destruction of the whole City. For if not during the desolation of Titus, surely they must have been stamped out and buried in the destruction and ruins of after years. During my walks, rambles, and excursions in and about the neighbourhood of

Jerusalem, I did not take a single note, and surely it was not necessary. The utter and entire rubbish one is often obliged to listen to from ignorant guides, is almost offensive to the reader of Holy Writ, and the sooner entirely forgotten the better. I would therefore ask, and recommend my brother Catholics and Christians, should they at any time visit the Holy City and holy places, to refrain taking with them either note-book, or pencil, for fear that they may be tempted to transcribe any of the bosh they hear. Indeed, I would almost ask them not to go with a guide at all; but *so far* I will not go, as guides are necessary for wandering through the many and difficult intricacies of the narrow streets and defiles of Jerusalem—later on, I discovered this to my cost. However, I must stick to the subject on hand, namely, the Church of the Holy Sepulchre.

The number of spurious holy sites pointed out under the roof of this one building is simply and only absurd. *But there are two spots* which I believe to be thoroughly authenticated, viz., *The Tomb* and *Calvary*.

The subject I am about to briefly discuss has been handled by many and learned men. I am willing to stand or fall by my arguments. Troops of English, as well as other Europeans, who have visited the Holy Church, have been pleased to throw over altogether what they call 'the trumpery of the church of the Holy Sepulchre.' And this expression includes all that is contained under the sacred roof. 'The main object of enquiry,' says Dr. Bannister, 'is whether the memory of these places was preserved during the first three centuries, because soon after this period the erection of religious edifices on the spots, and the descriptions of historical events, leave no further room for doubt or difficulty.' So this has to be proved, and if so, well and good. It must be borne in mind that I wish only to prove, if possible, the correctness of the *two* great sites—

'The Tomb' and 'Calvary'; the many other supposed holy spots crowded here, I cannot pretend to defend. I shall continue to quote from Bannister. 'In the first place, then, Eusebius has given us a list of fourteen bishops, from James the first bishop of Jerusalem, who was made such in the year 35, to Jude, who brings the succession up to the time of the persecution by Adrian. Now, what is well worthy of attention is, that Simon, the second of these bishops, or, the first after James, and who was bishop at the time of the taking of Jerusalem by Titus, lived to be 120 years old; and we find him suffering martyrdom many years after that event in the time of Trajan. This venerable man, then, who lived to see the church re-established, may be considered as a safe depository of those traditions, which might have been in danger of being lost during its dispersion; and it may be concluded that by him they would be faithfully transmitted to his successors, who fixed their residence on the ruins of the city. This need not, however, be supposed to have rested solely with him. At the commencement of the troubles which preceded the siege of Jerusalem, the Christians withdrew to Pella, *and immediately* after the destruction of the city, returned to take up their dwellings among the ruins. In the space of a few months they could not have forgotten their sanctuaries, which being also without the walls, probably suffered less from the siege.' This, I think, is a forcible argument. I should certainly think, as I suppose would most others, that spots *without* the walls would be little affected by the siege. 'We cannot have much hesitation, then, in admitting that the traditions respecting Jerusalem were delivered down in the manner above mentioned to the year 137, when the Emperor Adrian rebuilt the city, and in his zeal for paganism caused a statue of Venus to be erected on Mount Calvary, and another, of Jupiter, on the Holy Sepulchre; the grotto of Bethlehem was likewise given up to

the rites of Adonis.' 'The folly of idolatry,' says M. Chateaubriand, 'thus published, by its imprudent profanations, the doctrine of the cross, which it was so much to its own interest to conceal. Immediately after this second dispersion of the church at Jerusalem, it was re-established in the line of the Gentile bishops—the first of whom was Mark; and Eusebius again gives us a list of his successors, twenty in number, up to the time of the persecution of Dioclesian in the year 284. Now it is evident from the long line of successive bishops, that the church at Jerusalem enjoyed a state of peace for nearly a century and a half; and it is absolutely incredible that these men, either from piety or interest, should not have taken care to maintain and to transmit the exact position of spots rendered memorable from having been the scenes of the leading articles of their religion. During greater part of this time, these sacred spots continued to be profaned by the idolatrous statues of Adrian, which however served to mark their places; and which were unable to repulse the Christians from the objects of their veneration: for, says Sozomenes, the Pagans rejoiced in the idea that the Nazarenes when they repaired to Golgotha to pray, would appear to be paying adoration to the daughter of Jupiter. Surely we want no greater evidence to show that a perfect knowledge of the sacred places was retained at this time. What became eventually of the statues of Adrian we have no certain account. It is probable that if the Christians dare not openly remove them, they were not molested in continuing their own worship in their immediate vicinity; and that as Christianity gained ground, they were suffered to moulder into ruin, or otherwise they remained until thrown down by St. Helena. We have now arrived at the period when the persecution under Dioclesian commenced, which occasioned the third dispersion of the Church, which was not again united until the establishment of Christianity as the

religion of the empire of Constantine, in the year 327. But it is impossible, that in the short period of forty years, supposing the Christians to have been debarred all access to the objects of their veneration during that time, their exact situation should have been effaced from their memories, as many must have been living both at the commencement and termination of this period. This supposition will have gained additional weight, if it can be shown that prior to this period the holy places were resorted to by Christians from different parts of the world. From this epoch, namely, that of Constantine, everything relating to the holy places becomes matter of history. Constantine wrote to Macarius, bishop of Jerusalem, to build a church over the tomb of our Saviour; while the Emperor's mother, Helena, went herself to superintend this and many similar works in the Holy Land. Eusebius, who wrote immediately after this restoration of the holy places, speaks of the Holy Sepulchre, of Mount Calvary, Bethlehem, the Mount of Olives, and the grotto where Christ revealed the mysteries to the Apostles. St. Jerome, about the year 385, gives a complete delineation of the same places, and what is more to the purpose speaks of their having been visited by pious Christians from the time of our Saviour's ascension as a thing well known, and says, that in his time, pilgrims resorted to Jerusalem from the most distant parts of the then known world, and especially mentions Britain and Ireland.' I must quote no further, and I think to comment is unnecessary. These are simply my reasons for believing in the two holy sites—of Calvary and our Lord's Tomb; let those who can gainsay them. It should be remembered that they were *both without the second wall* of the ancient city on the hill of Bezetha, which now is a crowded portion of the modern city.

CHAPTER VI.

HOLY SEPULCHRE—(*continued.*)

My two companions and myself bent our steps to the Holy Church. It was now past seven A.M., so we might expect to find the door open. We had to traverse a portion of David Street, take the first turning on the left, Christian Street, then first turning on the right, Palmer Street, which is little better than a mere passage with a twist in it, and lined with beggars. This leads into the square, in front of the door of the church of the Holy Sepulchre.

The first object on entering is the stone of unction; over this stone are suspended three large silver lamps, gifts from the Roman, Greek, and Armenian convents. The stone is a long flat yellowish marble slab, *under which* is said to be *the stone* on which the body of our Lord was laid, when taken down from the cross. Pilgrims were constantly approaching, prostrating themselves and kissing the stone, believing, doubtless, that it is the very true stone. But the holy monks, I believe, state that the true stone is beneath, hidden from view and touch to prevent its pollution by the Turks. As to the genuineness of this statement I cannot give an opinion; but there is great doubt in my mind respecting it. However, we went through the form, and touched the stone with our lips. On the right of the stone of unction is the chapel of Adam, within which are the tombs of Godfrey de Bouillon, and his successor, Baldwin the First. This chapel is under Mount Calvary, and so dark that I could not see very much. Leaving this little caverned chapel, and turning to the right, is a tall flight of steps leading up to the sacred mount; but we went first to the Holy Sepulchre. On the left of the stone of unction is an iron circular railing, having within it a single lamp always burning. This cage-like place is said to mark

the spot where our Lord's mother stood while the body was being prepared for burial. The great basilica is now open before us, under which is the tomb built of marble, and profusely ornamented with lamps. It occupies the centre of the church. I approached, took off my shoes, and entered a small square chamber, very gloomy. Several people were here awaiting the opportunity of entering still further into a yet smaller chamber which contains '*the tomb*' of our Saviour. In the middle of the first small chamber is a stone, *said* to be the one that closed the mouth of the sepulchre. The entrance to the little chamber of the tomb is by a small low door; the apartment itself permits of only three or four persons being in it at one time. Persons awaiting their turn passed in, and for a few short moments prayed over the sepulchre; they then retired backwards through the low doorway, making room for others who stepped in. There was no pushing or any unseemly conduct in this Holy of holiest of places at any time during my various visits. This was my experience; I know not what others have met with. When I considered my turn to enter had come, I pressed gently forward, and was not resisted. I knelt and kissed the cold marble which with such great authority is supposed to cover the spot where the body of our Lord was laid. And *at last*, after traversing thousands of miles of sea, I was indeed here. Oh! sweet Saviour, I thank Thee—unworthy, frail, and weak though I am—forgive me my sins, and let me serve Thee all my days. I had to rise and go, for many others were waiting. I retreated slowly backwards, facing the place of burial. And I had lived to come here. How often I had feared that something might start up to prevent me. How I had longed, how I had wished and prayed, that I might come to the Holy City! Once there, I seemed to care not what might happen. I had not been in perfect health for some time; but I hesitated not in undertaking any amount of

exertion for the grand object in view, and here I was, apparently not a whit the worse. How could I thank my dear Lord for his kindness and mercies towards me?

Facing the tomb is the Greek chapel, the handsomest and largest of the very many under this one roof. About the centre of it is a small pillar, said to mark the navel of the earth. Passing through the chapel, and out of a door on the right, we approached the flight of stone steps leading up to Calvary. Oh quiet! still! breathe not a single word; for it was here, Oh! mystery of mysteries, that the Son of God died the awful death on the cross for a sinful world. Yes, tears you may flow; restrain not your weeping; it was here the gentle, loving Jesus was brought and nailed to the cross. Nails were driven through his gentle, soft, and tender hands; iron spikes were passed through both feet, and so He died for me, even me. Oh! what love! And *there* stood His agonised Mother, who loved her Son, her perfect, loving Son so much. See, ah! see the cross is elevated; see, it is placed in that hole, there! '*The Son of God!*' See the blood trickle from His wounded brow, and from the torn and lacerated wounds in His hands and feet. Oh! what love! what perfect love for a wicked, ungrateful world! The soldiers offer Him something to alleviate and deaden His fearful agony; but when He had tasted thereof, and knew the properties of the potion offered, He would not drink. He was determined to go through with it all for our redemption. Ah! but for a moment His human powers seem to fail beneath such a weight of mortal agony, and He cries, 'Eloi! Eloi! lama Sabachthani.' 'My God! my God! why hast Thou forsaken Me?' He breathes. '*It is finished.*' Yes, my dearest Lord, '*it is finished.*' Thou *hast* done all Thou camest to do. Thou hast redeemed the world. 'It is finished;' yes, indeed, all is complete. *How can* we thank Thee? The very word 'thanks' seems a mockery for such inestimable

love. 'It is finished,' and the God Man died. The sun's face is veiled; all is dark; the earth quaked; the rocks rent, and the veil of the magnificent temple was torn from the top to the bottom. The Son of the living God who came among us is dead; slain by man, for whom He came to die. 'Truly this was the Son of God.' Let us with such feelings and remembrances rife within us ascend the steps that lead to Calvary, the great sacrificial altar, where the stupendous sacrifice was offered up for the sins of the whole world.

Silently we ascend those steps, and bow low in lowly reverence, approaching with inclined head to the spot pointed out as where the cross stood. Down, down in our humblest posture, we kissed the spot. For some time we remained kneeling in prayer; quiet, not a word must be uttered on this sacred mount, and silently we left. The rent rock is pointed out beneath the holy and sanctified mount. The fissure is such that it is plain it cannot be artificial. The portions separated fit or would fit if they were brought together into each others' grooves. It is quite evident that a convulsion of nature must have caused the rent.

And now that I had visited the two holiest spots of the most holy on this earth, what were my feelings? Had they been utterly, perfectly, and entirely realised? Oh, no, far from it; they were not. All in this world seems to have *something* wanting. No happiness is perfect *here*, and my feelings only served to remind me that I was in a cold, ungrateful world. That utmost fervour I wished for, that perfect love I pined for, was not mine; and if *here* this could not be, where else in this world of ours might it be looked for and obtained? *Perfect love*, *perfect rest* is in heaven alone.

Each morning, while in Jerusalem, I went to Mount Calvary and the Holy Sepulchre, and here I breathed forth

my daily prayers to God. Oh, blessing of all blessings, being permitted so to do! Can I ever forget it? I found myself somewhat mistaken as to the height of the mound or Mount Calvary; it had a greater elevation than I expected. I had looked for it to be about five or six feet in height only; instead of that, it is about twenty feet. The summit is levelled and occupied by a chapel. The places where the three crosses stood were, I believe, a few years ago pointed out. Now one alone is preserved—that in which our Saviour's cross stood, or is said to have stood, for of course a certain amount of doubt must necessarily hang over the preservation of so small a spot during the years previous to the commencement of history, but at the same time I think it quite likely that the holes of the crosses may have been afterwards discovered, as it is probable that they were cut in the solid rock and not simply placed in soft earth. An altar is erected over where our Lord's cross stood, and the spot is marked with a glory in brass.

During this our first visit we did not 'do' the whole that was to be seen in the sacred edifice, but, as I am on the subject, it will, I think, be advisable to continue my description of it.

Around the open space under the dome are many small chapels for the Syrians, Copts, Armenians, &c. &c. We were shown into a dark recess at and near the back of the 'holy tomb,' which stands quite by itself. In this recess are the tombs of Joseph and Nicodemus. The chapel on the left, coming out of the tomb, is the chapel of the Apparition. This is where our Lord is said to have appeared to the blessed Virgin in the form of a gardener, after he had risen from the dead. Inside the door on the right, enclosed in wire or ironwork, is the Pillar of Flagellation. It can only be seen by holding a taper close to it. It was to this that our Saviour is said to have been fastened and

scourged before being taken into the presence of Pontius Pilate.

There were very many minor chapels we went into, but I listened so carelessly to what our guide said, that I am really unable as well as unwilling to repeat much of the nonsense we were told. I remember having pointed out to me, under a table or altar, the stocks in which our Lord was placed. Scripture being silent on the subject, I was very sceptical. In another chapel was shown the veritable crown of thorns He wore. The case containing it was apparently let into the wall, with a very dingy glass frontal. The chapels of the Virgin, of the Parting of our Lord's Garments, and the chapel of the Mocking, I took but small or no account of. To the chapel of St. Helena we had to descend some forty-nine or fifty steps. It is here where St. Helena is said to have discovered the three crosses, and I am inclined to believe the story. The chair (stone, I think) is pointed out in which she sat, superintending the workmen while digging. Perhaps I should remark that what I might be inclined to doubt is the exact spot where the crosses were found, and not that they were found by St. Helena, for it is attested by great and high authorities, viz., SS. Cyril of Jerusalem, Ambrose, Chrysostom, and Paulinus; and also by the historians Rufinus, S. Sulpicius, Severus, Sozates, Sozomen, and Theodoret, that St. Helena dreamt three several times that the three crosses were buried in a certain spot in Jerusalem. After the third dream, she determined to set out for the Holy City, and follow the dictates of her dreams. She found the place she had seen in the vision, and superintended the excavation. The three crosses were discovered, and the title lying separate from them. The difficulty now was to discover which of the three crosses was that of our Redeemer. The Bishop of Jerusalem, S. Macarius, proposed that they should be carried to a lady lying sick in the city,

which was accordingly done, and on touching the wood of our Saviour's cross she was restored to health. The chapel of the Invention, so named from the crosses having been found there, is some thirteen steps still lower down.

The most impressive time to visit the Church of the Holy Sepulchre is at the hour of vespers, five P.M., when gloom enshrouds its mysterious corridors and dim recesses; while the solemn peal of the organ rolls through the church, mingled with the voices of the monks, which seem to rise to heaven's vaults together with the clouds of incense. But you must try and imagine the solemn chant of these holy men echoing in awful grandeur along the gloomy aisles of this most sacred edifice, for any description of mine would spoil the reality. And think you not this would call to mind the long, long series of pilgrims, monks, and warriors, who for so many centuries have knelt in solemn prayer around the sacred tomb. The long and seemingly endless procession still flows on and on, like the stream of a never-failing river—it seems to have no end. Hundreds and thousands have joined in the march who are lying in the sleep of death, and have been taking their rest for long centuries past; others fall into the ranks, and they too, in their turn, go hence and are no more seen. The procession seems without end; but by and by the last pilgrim will come and go, and then the world will end. It is a solemn sight to stand at the door of the grand old church, and observe the weary, footsore pilgrims arrive at the long-wished-for goal. Some of them have walked hundreds and even thousands of miles to visit their Lord's tomb; and no matter *now* what happens to them—the wish of their lives is at last accomplished.

It would be difficult to arrive at a correct estimate of the size of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. The length is about 300 feet, the breadth is very irregular. On the left at the entrance is a large divan in a recess in the wall,

cushioned and carpetted, where the Turkish door-keeper is usually sitting with some of his friends, smoking a long pipe and drinking coffee. Without, in the square yard, one is beset by sellers of various wares made in Jerusalem, such as rosaries, crosses, carved shells, &c., &c. Large supplies of variegated glass rings from Hebron lie piled on the ground. And one is dreadfully beset here by the sellers, and a short distance hence waylaid by beggars. Woe be to you if you give to one, numbers of others follow up the successful attack. The dire distress in Jerusalem is beyond anything I have witnessed elsewhere, and one feels so utterly helpless to give relief.

CHAPTER VII.

VISIT TO THE BRITISH CONSUL AND TO BISHOP GOBAT OF JERUSALEM.

I RETURNED to the hotel feeling quite ready for breakfast at about 8·30 A.M. '*The Breakfast*' was not until 12 noon, but before that time opportunities were given to regale oneself on bread, butter, and honey, also eggs or omelet. My short stay of only three entire days in the Holy City rendered it very necessary for me to be constantly on the move in order to see and do all I wished to accomplish. After refreshing my inner man, I started off for the encampment outside the walls and in the valley of Gihon. But before conducting my reader thither, I must first mention the very beautiful and interesting view from the terrace of the hotel on which my bed-room was situated. Immediately below was Hezekiah's Pool, a square basin of water entirely surrounded by houses, and the only view of it, apparently obtainable, was either from the tops of the houses or of this hotel. On the left were the two domes of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre; the one over the

Tomb being in thorough repair and handsomely gilded was quite resplendent, sparkling and glittering in the sun. Opposite, over a thick cluster of houses, rose the proud dome of the Mosque of Omar, and to the left of that the smaller Mosque el Aksa. Further off still, the eye wandered away to the graceful slope of Olivet, with the Church of the Ascension on the top, to the right of that the Mount of Offence.

On reaching the encampment I found a move being made. The whole party were preparing to turn out. We bent our steps up the valley of Gihon, outside the walls, to the ancient Damascus Gate, a few minutes' walk from which brought us to the house of Mr. Moore, the British Consul. We, the senior officers, went in to pay our respects, while the midshipmen, some sixty or seventy in number, remained outside in a small courtyard which they pretty well crowded. We were ushered into the drawing-room; after entering, one long step had to be ascended to reach the drawing-room proper. I observed this peculiarity in other houses in the East. As is usual during such visits coffee was handed round. The subject of our approaching tour to Jericho, Dead Sea, and Jordan was discussed, and the Consul kindly promised to procure a guard for us. Arrangements were also made that we should visit the Pasha next day, and afterwards see the Mosque of Omar. Mr. Moore hearing that we had brought all the midshipmen with us, and that they were waiting without, insisted upon their being sent for, and they were all had up, partially crowding this and the adjoining room.

On taking our leave we at once proceeded to Dr. Gobat's, the Bishop of Jerusalem. Part of the route lay through the Via Dolorosa, down which tradition says our Saviour bore the Cross to the place of crucifixion on Golgotha's mound, and it certainly seemed to me that this must have been the whereabouts of the street through which He

passed on His painful way. It leads right through the city from St. Stephen's Gate, passing the Governor's house, which occupies the probable site of Fort Antonia. The name for this long, dismal, and dark street is well chosen. In some parts it is gloomy indeed, shrouded in many places as it is by heavy archways. The paving, as in all other parts of Jerusalem, is very defective; broken and uneven stones cover the way, which makes walking often quite painful, and the narrowness of the road renders it very necessary to keep a constant look out, otherwise the loaded camels or mules passing and repassing are very liable, as they rudely brush past, to upset one off his feet. The sixteen stations of the cross are still carefully pointed out by guides, but taking into consideration the frequent destruction of Jerusalem, and the number of times it has risen over its own ruins, and that the original Via Dolorosa must be some thirty or more feet below the surface of the present, not much if any reliance can be placed on a single bit of what is here shown.

The Anglican Cathedral Church of St. James is situated on Mount Zion, close to the Tower of Hippicus, or, as some have it, David. It is a pretty little church, built in the shape of a cross. It was erected in 1842, and the difficulty of procuring a foundation for it was very considerable, owing to the accumulation of debris, it may be the collection of thousands of years, that obstructed the work. However, Mr. J. W. Johns, architect, after some time succeeded in reaching the maiden earth, after sinking a shaft to the depth of thirty-five feet from the surface; and on Jan. 28, 1842, the first stone was laid by Bishop Alexander, on the rock of Mount Zion. The idea of an Anglican bishopric at Jerusalem originated with the King of Prussia, and the Anglican Cathedral Church owes its origin to the London Society for Promoting Christianity amongst the Jews. The proposal of the King of Prussia to form a

bishopric in Jerusalem was warmly received by the Secretary for Foreign Affairs, as well as by the Archbishop of Canterbury and Bishop of London, and the negotiation was speedily effected. It was agreed that the Bishop of Jerusalem should be alternately nominated by England and Prussia; the see was to cover Palestine, Syria, Chaldæa, Egypt, and Abyssinia. England nominated the first bishop, and the Rev. M. S. Alexander, a converted Jew, was the clergyman consecrated by the Archbishop of Canterbury at Lambeth. He, however, did not long occupy the post; he died in Nov. 1845, when the present bishop, the Rev. S. Gobat, a German, received the appointment. He had formerly been a missionary in Abyssinia, and afterwards, I think, head master of a college at Malta.

The bishop's house is situated about a stone's throw from the Mediterranean hotel, and little more than 100 yards from the church. Some five or six of us *only* paid his Revd. lordship a visit. We found him in his study, and were separately introduced by our commander, who had had the honour of a previous acquaintance when formerly in the Holy City. He is a tall, patriarchal looking old gentleman, of perhaps a little over seventy years. He received us in his quiet, kind way, and in due course our visit terminated.

CHAPTER VIII.

FIRST WALK IN JERUSALEM.

Of course, being so large a party as we were, little short of one hundred in all, including guides, it was not feasible that we should march about in a single troop, so detached parties of ten or fifteen were divided off, each with a guide.

The first place the party to which I belonged visited was the Armenian Convent. What *would* poor dear Jerusalem

do without her monks and monasteries? Ah! indeed. I have travelled over a large portion of our globe, but never have I witnessed such fearful, such dire distress as about the streets of the Holy City.

O you, my many friends in England, if you knew the good the monks do in Jerusalem, would you, could you ever again rail against them? These men 'leave all' for Jesus; here, amid the ruins of Jerusalem, reside many communities of Christian monks whom nothing can compel to forsake the Tomb of Christ; neither plunder nor personal ill-treatment, nor menaces of death itself. Night and day they chant their hymns around the Holy Sepulchre. Driven by the cudgel and sabre, women, children, flocks and herds seek refuge in the cloisters of these recluses. What prevents the armed oppressor from pursuing his prey and overthrowing such feeble ramparts? The charity of the monks; they deprive themselves of the last resources of life to ransom their suppliants. My visit to Jerusalem I regret to say was a very short one, consequently I had no opportunity of making the enquiries I should have wished; but if I am not wrongly informed, and I think I am not, for I have it from good authority, it is the monks who feed and clothe the poor and destitute and visit and provide medicine for the sick. Ah, my dear district visiting friends in England, little can you tell what district visiting in Jerusalem is like, and no words of mine can describe it to you. Perhaps if some of you who are most zealous in good works, and may God help you, were to come here, you would almost faint at the doors of some of the wretched hovels at the disgusting sight of disease, filth, and wretchedness that would meet your gaze. Not so the good and meek, but brave and holy monk, he fears to go nowhere, the most virulent and horrible disease daunts him not. He quietly walks into places and passes through scenes that would stagger the bravest soldier who

would flinch not when marching up to the cannon's mouth. But the courage of the monk is more real bravery while he serves his *Master*, than that of the soldier while he serves his *master*. But, be it remembered, the holy monk has no wife, no family, he is 'without carefulness' for the things of this world; he has only one great care and that is 'All for Jesus.' He has left all for the Lord, and fears not one whit for himself, but only waits with patience the call of his much loved Saviour, who is his 'All in All.' In a word the monks are the one great blessing to Jerusalem; they befriend and feed both friend and foe. Charities of all kinds are connected with the monasteries, and at the gate of the Armenian Convent food is served out daily to the poor. Possibly I shall, further on, have to say a word or two more about the dear, good old monks of Palestine.

We entered the convent through an archway on the left, going towards Zion Gate. The convent is dedicated to St. James, the first bishop of Jerusalem, who is said to have been martyred here. The spot is pointed out in a small side chapel, where a lamp is kept ever burning night and day. His chair or throne (I believe it is) is shown in the church, a lighted lamp is also kept continually burning over it—none are permitted to sit in this chair. Numbers of Scriptural events respecting our Lord are crowded within the space encircled by the walls of the Armenian Convent. I forget much that was told us by the guide, and perhaps it is as well so, for I suppose that not a single thing said or pointed out could by any possibility be true. For instance, a stone with a hole in it to represent a mouth, was the one said to have cried out 'Hosannah' when our Lord entered the city in triumph. The visitor to Jerusalem should go prepared to hear much that is neither mentioned in the Bible nor is in any way Scriptural, and which in no way could have its origin from Holy Writ. Lastly, before leaving, we went over a museum of relics,

within the walls of the convent, none of which I suppose any of us knew anything about, and very great deal better specimens of whatever they were might be seen in the British Museum.

CHAPTER IX.

VISIT TO QUARRIES UNDER THE CITY AND THE JEWS' WAILING PLACE.

After lunch, or more properly, perhaps, noonday breakfast, we followed our guide through the Holy City and out by the Damascus Gate, where, not far from Jeremiah's Grotto, was a hole in the rock under the wall. Through this aperture we all crept and found ourselves in an extensive and dark cavern. However, the guide had brought a supply of tapers, which he lit and served out to us; but coming straight from the sunlight, the darkness seemed so intense that even the large number of lights afforded scarcely glimmer enough to see the ground beneath our feet. The gloom around was impenetrable, and it was very evident that we were in an enormous cavern. On we went in single file, each with his taper, following the guide down a steep declivity, so steep that one could not but dread a fall in the great darkness. However, on we went and down we went, sometimes turning this way sometimes that, indeed, all kinds of ways, until one could not help picturing to himself the horrors of being lost in such a place. How helpless one would feel on such an occasion, and these feelings were tended in no way to be decreased when the guide pointed out to us where he had once found a dead body of a man who was lost in the ramifications of this cavern. We were now underneath Jerusalem, far below all that ever had been of the city; ruins upon ruins of the old city were above our heads, and on the top of all stood

the modern city. After conducting us far into the very bowels of the rock and under the hill Bezetha, our guide paused to assure us that we need be under no misapprehension as he was a guide for the cavern and knew all its many windings and turnings. Guide, or no guide, I could not understand how anybody could ever learn to find his way about in such a place. These were the quarries from which the stone was cut to build Solomon's temple, and the various places where instruments for such a purpose had been at work were pointed out to us. Further and further we penetrated into the depths of the rocky cavern until the atmosphere became very oppressive, and perspiration began to run from each pore; however, the chief object of interest, it seemed, was not yet reached, and the guide led on and on until, it may be after about an hour and a half, we arrived at a square chamber, with a stream of water issuing forth from the further end. If I remember rightly it was from here that some of the largest blocks of stone were cut; and what a mystery it seemed as to the mode used for moving such enormous masses and weights of rock, and how they were conveyed away to the entrance of the quarry. We now began to retrace our steps, and I, together with many others, doubtless felt considerable relief, when at last we once again breathed the free and open air. We had one fright while in the quarries; the guide had desired that we should all keep together, when by and by one of the party was found missing; we called and called but no reply came; however, it afterwards turned out that the missing one had remained outside the whole time we were exploring.

To day, Friday, was *the day* for visiting the Jews' Wailing Place. For it was this day more particularly that the Jews went thither to wail over the destruction of their beautiful house, and it seems probable that nearly ever since its destruction, about 1,800 years ago, have they con-

tinued this practice. Again we entered the city, and passing through the Damascus Gate, we traversed a part of the Via Dolorosa. The walk was not of the smoothest.

The Wailing Wall is, without doubt, the boundary of the Temple, which was so utterly destroyed that the prophecy of our Lord was literally fulfilled, and not one stone was left upon another that was not thrown down. But here was the original wall, and dearly had the Jews to purchase from the Turks the right to come and wail over their desolation and punishment, and sad was the sight to see. Many cry aloud, and tears are seen to chase one another down their pale, careworn, furrowed cheeks. The wall is high, and built of massive stones; but, in spite of their enormous weight, size, and strength, thousands of years have told upon them, and much has crumbled away and disappeared, so that in some places there are cavities, where large portions of stone have gone altogether. But pause, listen to the wailing; how sad! hearken to their words, 'Be not wroth very sore, O Lord, neither remember iniquity for ever: behold, see, we beseech thee, we are all Thy people. Thy holy cities are a wilderness, Zion is a wilderness, Jerusalem a desolation. Our holy and our beautiful house, where our fathers praised Thee, is burned up with fire: and all our pleasant things are laid waste. Wilt Thou refrain Thyself for these things, O Lord? Wilt Thou hold Thy peace, and afflict us very sore?' (Isaiah lxiv. 9—12.)

How literally Zion is a wilderness, Jerusalem a desolation, and their beautiful house—the Temple, *was* actually burned up with fire, in spite of all the efforts of Titus to save it. When the Romans gained entrance into the city, its destruction was caused by a soldier throwing a burning brand into it, and all endeavours to extinguish the furious devouring flames were of no avail, and the truly 'beautiful house was burned up with fire.' The Place of Wailing is

in the Tyropean valley, at the base of the wall which supports the west side of the Temple area. How well I can understand, as Jesus passed by the Temple with His disciples, the remark they made to Him, for *it* was built with the same grand old stones now before us :—'Behold! what manner of buildings and stones there are here,' and our Lord's reply, 'Not one stone shall be left upon another:' such has happened to the letter, and not one stone of the magnificent building has been left upon another; a portion only of the wall remaining as a monumental evidence to give us some idea of the superb grandeur of the edifices that were once here. But let us pass on, and leave the sad sight being enacted on this most interesting spot. I should, perhaps, here remark on the generally excellent conduct of all our young companions—the midshipmen and cadets, some of which, be it remembered, were little else than school boys; indeed, I think that they should be so described. They generally seemed to understand, during their journeyings in Syria, that they were in the Holy Land, and such had been previously impressed on their minds by one most anxious to behold no indecorous conduct or unseemly behaviour given way to by these young British midshipmen while visiting places so dear and so sacred to every Christian. But I regret to say, at the same time, that there were some who very apparently laboured under great ignorance on subjects upon which they, as Catholics, should have been informed. There were, of course, some who had cared not to attend our discourses or lectures previous to our reaching Syria, otherwise, may I hope, such would not have been. On the present occasion—and I think it was a solitary instance of anything of the kind—some of the young fellows did behave rather unseemly and unfeelingly by running up to the wall, putting their noses against it and setting up a wail in imitation of the poor Jews, and by also chipping off portions of the ancient stones.

South of the Wailing Place and close to the end of the Mosque enclosure where El Aksa stands, are the remains of the Ancient Bridge, which crossed the Tyropean valley. One of the stones here is twenty-five feet long: the width of the bridge is said to have been fifty-one feet. We were much interested in examining this piece of antiquity, and some measured a stone or two with their handkerchiefs.

Another visit to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, through which our guide conducted us, brought our first day in Jerusalem to a close.

And now, after we have dined and had half an hour or so of quiet, let us spend a brief period in hastily reviewing the history of Jerusalem.

CHAPTER X.

BRIEF HISTORY OF JERUSALEM.

According to Josephus—who, by the by, is oftentimes untruthful, even to an absurd extent, but on this occasion his account mostly agrees with the Bible—old tradition says, that Melchizedek was Shem, and that he, the son of Noah, founded Salem (the City of Peace). David ejected the Canaanites, and settled his own people therein. It was demolished entirely by the Babylonians 477 years and six months after him. From King David, who was the first of the Jews who reigned therein, was 1,179 years; but to its first building to its last destruction was 2,177 years. It had many times been besieged and taken, first by David, then by Shishak, King of Egypt; afterwards by Nebuchadnezzar, then by Antiochus; after him by Pompey, then by Sosius, then by Herod, and finally by Titus, in the second year of the reign of Vespasian, on the 8th of Sorpius (September). When Joshua fought against it, it was

called Jebus; the king of it was slain in the great battle of Gibeon (Joshua x.). The siege by Titus occupied four months and twenty-five days, from April 11, A.D. 70 to September 7, and he utterly destroyed the city which was then in the zenith of its glory. In this Eusebius somewhat differs, and he supposes that it was not entirely destroyed, and, doubtless, he is so far correct that numbers of underground rooms escaped. However, I think, on this occasion, we may rely more on Josephus, who lived at the time and was present with the Roman army, than on Eusebius, who lived about three centuries later.

The Jews again made a prolonged resistance when they rebelled against Hadrian about 132 A.D. Hadrian having destroyed the city, he again built a new town, and called it Ælia. Constantine it was who restored its ancient name, and did great things for it in building splendid churches and other edifices. The Holy City has suffered terrible calamities, and undergone many changes during the last 1,400 years. It was taken by the Persians under Closroes II., with vast slaughter. The basilica of the Holy Sepulchre was burned, the city sacked and pillaged about the year 614, and in 636 it was permanently wrested from the Christians by the Khalif Omar. The crusaders appeared before the walls June 1, 1099. The Franks kept possession of it less than 100 years, for it was given up to Saladin in 1187, and has since remained in the hands of Mohammedans. Saracens and Osmanly have in succession held it, and the flag of the Turk still floats over the Tower of Hippicus.

Its whole age now is not very much less than 4,000 years, spreading over almost the entire historic period of the human race; and the end is not yet. But be it remembered, that a thousand years with the Lord is as one day. Of all the sad stories of poor Jerusalem, none can be compared to that fearful one of the four months' siege of Titus,

which took place so shortly after the death and ascension of our Lord. Well might He, the gentle, loving Jesus, weep over the dire destruction he foresaw awaited the grand old city He beheld. Only a few years afterwards it was 'encompassed with armies,' and at the very time, too, when it was most unprepared, for the resources of the city were being wasted by civil strife; however, the Jews fought most valiantly, but the hand of God was against them, and step by step they had to retreat. Who can be for us if God be against us? Famine began, and soon raged amongst them; whole houses were full of dead. Titus cut a trench completely round the city, so that all hope of communication with the outside country was at an end, and another prophecy was fulfilled. With such ardour did the Roman soldiers work at this trench, that the whole undertaking was completed in a few days. Death, famine, and disease raged through the crowded city, and it soon became, as it were, a vast charnel house; heaps of rotting bodies were thrown over the walls. The battering rams were advanced to the walls, and thundered away against the towering bulwarks; every device that could be thought of was used to break the violence of the repeated blows. 'The factions within the city were compelled to unite for its common defence; and whatever may have been the cruelty of their conduct to the herd of famishing inhabitants (and it should not be forgotten that this is narrated by Josephus, their bitter enemy), we cannot refuse them their meed of praise for daring and determined valour. Step by step they defended what was to them the city of God, as well as of their fathers—sustained in their heroic endeavours, we cannot doubt, by the belief that, in their darkest hour, He would appear gloriously for the deliverance of His chosen people, and the confusion of her pagan oppressors.' Desperate encounters repeatedly took place around the battering rams, the Jews again and again

sallying forth with torch and sword to destroy them. The defenders used sacks to break the force of the blows, which they dropped over the wall; but the shower of missiles into the city, hurled by balistas and catapultas, forced them to relinquish this design, for they were beaten down by whole ranks. The first wall was abandoned, then the second, and the Romans came pouring into the city, but were met by such deadly showers of missiles from the houses and by-alleys, they were forced to beat a retreat. However, all was of no avail; the Romans had possession of the lower city, but the chief bulwarks, the Antonia, the Temple, and the upper city remained untaken. The dreadful story is soon told. The Romans again advance to the attack, and a breach was made in Fort Antonia. Although famine was now raging at its direst, so that 'the hands of the pitiful women,' it is said, 'had sodden their own children for meat,' step by step was defended by the fiercest valour. But God's hand is against his people; prophecy must be fulfilled. At night the trumpet sounded, and the Romans storm the breach, pouring pell-mell into the ruinous bulwark; and now for the last death struggle. The hounds of hell seemed to be let loose; friend and foe were hewn down in the darkness; the shrieks and screams cannot be described. Back, back, fell the Jewish defenders, and on, on rushed the stalwart Roman legions. The Jews retreated to the Temple court—their last expiring hope. This was taken; still they are within the cloisters. The Romans set fire to these, and the Jews are hemmed in. The Temple is in danger—oh! save it! It is too late; a burning brand is hurled within the grandly superb edifice, and, as it were in a moment, the 'beautiful house' bursts forth in masses of flame. 'If it were an appalling sight to the Roman, what was it to the Jew? The whole summit of the hill which commanded the city blazed like a volcano. One after another the buildings fell in with a tremendous crash, and were swal-

lowed up in the fiery abyss. The roofs of cedar were like sheets of flame; the gilded pinnacles shone like spikes of red light; the gate towers sent up tall columns of flame and smoke. The neighbouring hills were lighted up, and groups of people were seen watching, with horrible anxiety, the progress of the destruction; the walls and heights of the upper city were crowded with faces—some pale with the agony of despair, others scowling unavailing vengeance. The shouts of the Roman soldiers as they ran to and fro, and the howlings of the insurgents, who were perishing in the flames, mingled with the roaring of the conflagration, and the thundering sound of falling timbers. The echoes of the mountains replied, or brought back the shrieks of the people on the heights. All along the heights were resounded screams and wailings; men who were expiring with famine rallied their remaining strength to utter a cry of anguish and desolation.' [1]

It is said that more than 1,000,000 Jews perished in this siege, and that the valley of Hinnom, to the right of our encampment, was actually *heaped up with dead bodies;* which, when Titus beheld, even he was horror-stricken, and holding his hands to the skies, he called heaven to witness that he was not the cause of such a fearful slaughter; so says Josephus. 'O, Jerusalem! Jerusalem! how often would I have gathered thee together as a hen her chickens under her wings, and ye would not.'

Many years after, when the Jews attempted to rebuild the Temple, explosions from the subterranean vaults, arising from some unknown cause, so terrified the workmen, that they could not go on with their work, and the death of the Emperor Adrian put an end to the attempt.

[1] Milman.

CHAPTER XI.

SECOND DAY IN JERUSALEM.—MOUNT ZION.

To-day, or rather this day, was Saturday. I awoke early, and was up early. I could not waste my time in bed, and besides, I had passed a good night, for I had taken the precaution before retiring to rest of using the insect powder freely both on the bed as well as on my own person. I was tired, but did not get into bed very early, as some time was occupied in writing up my journal letter for my friends at home. I seldom, indeed,—only once while in Syria, *on shore* —neglected to write it up before, 'closing mine eyes in slumber.' (I think that's a quotation, but I am not sure); *there's* a pattern of a correspondent.

There was something so strange, yet so delightful, after blowing the candle out, to close one's eyes and think, 'I am in *Jerusalem.*' I had read so much about the dear, dear old city, and loved it so well, that it seemed to me almost like going to my home, and now that I was really and actually there, *how* could I sufficiently appreciate it? How peaceful and happy I felt, thinking and thinking, 'this is Jerusalem.' I was weary and tired. 'Oh, thanks be to Thee, my kind, dear Lord, for bringing me to this Thy Holy City—sweet Jerusalem, Je-ru-sa-lem,' and I dropped asleep, overcome with fatigue.

I was next morning up and dressed before six o'clock, and went out on the housetop. What a lovely view was here of the now peaceful city! Look at the Mount of Olives—pretty hill, glancing in the morning sun. The view from here I have already mentioned; and much as I should wish again and again to ponder on it, I must not weary my readers with repetitions. On going downstairs, I enjoyed my first early breakfast at about 6 A.M. As my health was not very good, and I determined in no way to

save myself, although there might be great risk in breaking down and becoming knocked up, I took what I was able in the way of nourishment. This early breakfast consisted of bread and butter and honey, washed down with two raw eggs beaten up in the generous wine of Madeira. My second breakfast, about three hours after, consisted of omelet, bread, butter, honey, and a cup of coffee. The third and last breakfast, at noon, was much the same as an early dinner. My ramble this morning, before going to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre at seven o'clock, was over Mount Zion; but as it was much more extended than I expected, the Holy Sepulchre was not reached until much later than I had wished. I have omitted to mention that last evening I called again at Dr. Gobat's to ask him if he would kindly have a special celebration of the Holy Sacrament for our party, and he was good enough to acquiesce. To-day was somewhat brighter than the preceding one, when we had had some severe tastes of the 'latter rain,' which periodically came down in drenching showers during the day. The Mediterranean Hotel is situated on Zion Hill; also Hezekiah's Pool, which is close by. It may be many people doubt the *verité* of this pool; but by the great authority, Dr. Robinson, it is assigned to him. We read in 2 Kings xx. 20, that he 'made a pool and a conduit, and brought water into the city.' As before mentioned, it is a large square basin of water: it is cut out of the rock, and is doubtless of very great antiquity. We read also in 2 Chron. xxxii. 30, that Hezekiah 'stopped the upper watercourse of Gihon, and brought it straight down to the *west side* of the city of David.' Therefore, in my humble opinion, *this* is the pool.

On leaving the hotel and crossing David Street, I found it already full of life, with camels, donkeys, and mules, with their drivers hustling and pushing about. The first object that meets the eye is the Tower of Hippicus, situated close to the Jaffa Gate—this is the citadel; some affirm that it

is the Tower of David; but Dr. Robinson is of opinion that it is no other than Hippicus, one of the three noble bulwarks erected by Herod, and it is stated by Josephus that Titus left the three towers standing after the destruction of the rest of the city. The two others, called after Phasaelis and Mariamne, no longer remain. These three bulwarks, it seems, were named by Herod after his three especial friends; and there appears to be good reason for believing that this one is the wreck of the once awe-inspiring bulwarks of Zion. The three especial friends, Josephus says, were 'his brother, his friend, and his wife.' I cannot admire the want of gallantry in the placing of his wife last. The two friends he lost fighting in battle, and his wife he killed out of jealousy. The Tower of Hippicus is a square solid block without a vacuity, and the enormous stones display very great age. The splendid palace of Herod is thought to have stood close here, and over the site where the English church now stands, and extending as far as to the Armenian Convent. This same Herod built the temple, and completed Fort Antonia. Cæsarea, which I shall hope to mention by and by, was also his entire work: his dreadful end took place there. I continued my way down the street leading to Zion Gate, passing the Armenian Convent, and under the archway which spans the road. This piece of the Armenian Convent is one of the latest additions, and joins it to the gardens opposite. I passed under the arch, and a short distance further, out of Zion Gate. The clump of buildings immediately outside comprise, the house of Caiaphas, David's tomb, and the Cœnaculum, and the house of the Blessed Virgin Mary, to which she retired after the crucifixion. Of course all this is traditionary. I did not this morning visit these various places, but as we are on the spot, I may as well describe them. The house of Caiaphas, the high priest, whither our Lord was conducted for judgment, is the building imme-

diately outside the gate. The place is far too modern to answer to what it is intended for. Under the altar here in the little chapel is shown the stone that was at the door of our Saviour's sepulchre; and it is said that many years ago the Armenians stole it from thence, and brought it here by strategy. Consequently if both stories be correct, and the stone shown at the tomb as well as this one be genuine, there must have been two stones that were rolled away from the mouth of the tomb. However, I think the safest plan would be to believe in neither. 'Here is also shown a small cell, said to have been our Lord's prison, till the morning when He was carried before Pilate, and also the spot where Peter was frightened into a denial of his Master.'—I quote from Maundrell. The same things being shown us within the walls, and in the Armenian convent, in the house of Annas, the high priest, I feel just a little bit confused. The Cœnaculum is only a very short distance from the house of Caiaphas. It comprises the Tomb of David, and the large upper chamber in which our Saviour instituted the Holy Sacrament of His Body and Blood, the evening before His death. And it is said to have been here in this room, when the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, that the Holy Ghost descended upon them in visible appearance as of cloven tongues of fire, and sat upon each of them. A deep archway, with a flight of steps on the left, leads to the large upper chamber, and it is beneath this that the tomb of the poet-king is said to be. Neither Jew nor Christian is permitted to enter, and great mystery enshrouds it. Josephus tells a curious story about Herod, who, breaking in by night, attempted to rifle the treasures contained in the royal mausoleum, but was defeated of his purpose by the sudden bursting forth of flames.

An extraordinary story is also told by Benjamin of Tudela, who visited Jerusalem during its occupation by

the Crusaders.—'On Mount Zion are the sepulchres of the House of David, and those kings who reigned after him. In consequence of the following circumstances, however, this is at present hardly to be recognised. Fifteen years ago, one of the walls of the place of worship fell down, and the Patriarch ordered the priest to repair it. He ordered stones to be taken down from the original wall of Zion for that purpose; and twenty workmen were hired at stated wages, who broke down stones from the very foundations of the walls of Zion. Two of these labourers, who were intimate friends, upon a certain day treated one another, and repaired to their work after their friendly meal. The overseer accused them of dilatoriness, but they answered they would still perform their day's work, and would employ the time thereupon while their fellow labourers were at meals. They then continued to break out stones, until happening to meet with one which formed the mouth of a cavern, they agreed to enter it in search of treasure; and they proceeded until they reached a large hall supported by pillars of marble, encrusted with gold and silver, and before which stood a table with a golden sceptre and crown. This was the sepulchre of David, King of Israel; to the left of which they saw that of Solomon, in a similar state; and so on the sepulchres of the kings of Judah, who were buried there. They further saw chests locked up, the contents of which nobody knew, and were on the point of entering the hall, when a blast of wind, like a storm, issued forth of the mouth of the cavern so strong, that it threw them almost lifeless to the ground. There they lay till evening, when another wind rushed forth, from which they heard a voice like that of a man calling aloud, "Get up and go forth from this place." The men rushed out full of fear, and proceeded to the Patriarch to report what had happened to them. This ecclesiastic summoned into his presence R. Abraham el Constantine, a pious ascetic,

one of the mourners of the fate of Jerusalem, and caused the two labourers to repeat what they had previously repeated. R. Abraham therefore informed the Patriarch that they had discovered the sepulchres of David and of the kings of Judah. The following morning the labourers were sent for again, but they were found stretched upon their beds, and full of fear; they declared they would not attempt again to go to the cave, as it was not God's will to discover it to any one. The Patriarch ordered the place to be walled up, so as to hide it effectually from everybody to the present day. The above-mentioned R. Abraham told me all this.

It is, I consider, quite possible that future excavations may throw some light on this marvellous story.

On Mount Zion there are several Christian cemeteries, and during one of my several visits to this lovely hill I saw a number of women come to wail; but I think at least some of them were hired mourners, to judge from their otherwise than sorrowful countenances previous to arrival. This ancient custom is continued throughout Syria.

And now let us pause for a few minutes and rest awhile on this stone, while we contemplate the lovely view spread out before us. How clear and bright all seems in the early morning sun, standing out against the blue sky. Even supposing there were no associations to add interest, still the view from here, the top of Mount Zion, is simply beautiful. 'Beautiful in situation, the joy of the whole earth is Mount Zion,' as the Psalmist has it. (Ps. xlviii. 2.) Now observe the picture; it is almost as clear in my mind's eye as if I were still sitting on that holy Mount. At our back is the hoary crumbling wall of Jerusalem; before us is the verdant slope of the hill itself, descending some hundreds of feet down until the valley below is reached; there is no change in its formation, it is the same now as it was many centuries ago. Buildings and whole

cities have been laid low and now mingle with the dust, but not so with Zion; it still rears its proud, noble height, unchanged, undecaying *in itself*. But, oh where, oh where are all the splendid mansions and palaces that once covered these slopes? 'Walk about Zion, and go round about her: tell the towers thereof. Mark well her bulwarks, consider her palaces, that ye may tell it to the generation following.' (Ps. xlviii. 13.) All is gone, all has vanished; not a ruin, not a stone remains to tell of past glory. O Jerusalem, why didst thou sin against thy Lord? 'Therefore shall Zion, for your sake, be ploughed as a field, and Jerusalem shall become heaps.' This prophecy, see, behold! it is fulfilled; the wide-spreading slope before you is actually a large ploughed field, and crops of grain are waving in the gentle breeze over the very site of those mansions alluded to by the Psalmist. The deep and rugged valley of Hinnom is at our feet, separating the hill of Evil Council from Zion. It was on this hill that the priests and elders are said to have taken counsel to destroy Jesus. Those ruins on the top may possibly contain the remains of the very building in which this Evil Council sat. The valley of Hinnom is a small valley, but a deep ravine, and to think that it could have been heaped full of dead bodies during the memorable siege calls forth something beyond a shudder. This valley is called also Tophet, and by the Greeks, Gehenna. Across this valley, up amongst the rocks, is Aceldama, the place where the betrayer of our Lord met his desperate end, and the tree pointed out as the one on which he hanged himself seems exactly suited for such a purpose. It was in this valley that children used to be sacrificed by the Canaanites, and afterwards by the Israelites, by causing them to 'pass through the fire to Moloch.' This idol was made of brass, and wore a regal crown, with arms extended as if about to embrace. When the statue was sufficiently heated, the poor little tender children were

placed in his fiery embrace, and thus consumed. The shrieks of the victims were drowned by musical instruments, and the spot was called Tophet, after the Hebrew word 'Tuph' (timbrels). Its other name, 'Gehenna,' of fire, seems to have been given it on account of its afterwards being used as a receptacle for all the filth of the city, the carcases of animals, and the dead bodies of malefactors; and to keep them from putrefying and poisoning the atmosphere, large fires were kept blazing night and day at the bottom of the glen. It must have been in the following out of this custom that the Jews, during the siege, cast over their dead until the glen became filled with corpses.'[1]

The vale as it runs round to the right joins the valley of Gihon, which is far less deep. Our encampment was spread out here, between the upper and lower pools of Gihon, but we cannot see it from the place where we are seated. As we sit here contemplating the many and most interesting events in connection with the country spread out before us, time passes rapidly forward on its never-resting wing, otherwise we have very much to say and very much to think about respecting the view which stretches away on our left. *There* is the valley of Jehoshaphat, and *there* the beautiful range of Olivet, comprising the Hill of Offence, then an undulating green slope until reaching the gentle declivity rising up the side of the Mount of Olivet, then another slope and rise up Mount Scopus; but as far as this we cannot see from here. However, we will sit here no longer, time is very valuable, and we can contemplate the scenery together with the many interesting events attached thereto as we slowly walk along outside the walls of Jerusalem with Bible in hand for our guide.

[1] The glen that was so filled was not the same as it is now, for the old Zion wall extended far down the hill's slope.

CHAPTER XII.

WALK FROM ZION GATE TO ST. STEPHEN'S GATE.

LEAVING the Zion Gate with the Lepers' Quarter close by, on our left, we proceed on our walk. I am not using the singular number, for I wish you, my reader, to imagine yourself strolling with me. The Lepers' Quarter consists only of a few miserable huts. Dr. Thompson in the 'Land and the Book' mentions having suddenly come across a crowd of the poor wretches, without eyes, noses, arms, &c., seeking charity; holding out the stumps of arms, partially eaten away by the loathsome disease, and uttering horrible guttural sounds from roofless mouths—with such artifices they sought compassion and charity. I was not unfortunate enough *here* to fall in with a single leper, but have seen plenty about Jerusalem; they were, I think, far more numerous on the Jaffa road than anywhere else. I do not recollect seeing any within the city walls of Jerusalem. On the Jaffa road they crouched by the wayside; although these poor beings are very importunate they will never touch you as other beggars do; but they frequently pull your coat, &c., to call your attention. This is not, to say the least of it, pleasant, considering that the generality of the Jerusalem beggars are about as filthy as your mind is able to conceive. Leprosy is not, *as a rule*, contagious; indeed, all the writers I have read, who touch upon the subject, seem to be of opinion that the disease cannot be caught; however, this is now proved to be erroneous. I was told in Jerusalem of a case which occurred to a doctor—an Englishman if I am not mistaken. With the object of making researches, and endeavouring to find out the root and origin of the disease, he mixed freely with the lepers, and was a great deal with them in their huts. He ultimately took the complaint and died, and this too, unfortunately, it seems,

without making any further discovery, as far as I could find out, from my informant. There is no known cure, although when subsequently in Damascus I was led to believe—but I don't think I did believe, that the atmosphere of the place had healing properties in it for leprosy; and I think we may safely be very sceptical on the subject; for, if it were so, all the lepers of Syria would be making their way thither. Archbishop Trench says: 'Leprosy was nothing short of a living death, a poisoning of the springs, a corrupting of all the humours of life, a dissolution by little and little of the whole body, so that one limb after another actually decayed and fell away.' It is indeed a frightful visitation. Children by leprous parents are often quite pretty while young. A poor happy looking little thing may be seen on the lap of its leper mother; there is no sign of the fell disease at present in the innocent child, but leprous blood flows in its veins. By and by its nails fall off one by one, its teeth drop out, the hair falls from its head, the roof of its mouth is eaten away, and as years progress the limbs themselves begin to decay, until the whole object is hideous to look upon. And this is leprosy, the incurable disease, that our Saviour healed by a word—'And behold, there came a leper and worshipped Him, saying, Lord, if Thou wilt, Thou canst make me clean. And Jesus put forth His hand, and touched him, saying, I will; be thou clean. And immediately his leprosy was cleansed.' (Matt. viii. 2, 3.) But come along; we must not pause longer at the Zion Gate, for there is much to be done to-day. Inside the gate to the right leads to the Jews' Quarter, the filthiest in the whole city. I should here mention that Jerusalem is built on four hills, viz. Zion, Moriah, Acra, and Bezetha. The portion of the city occupying the last named hill is modern, and since the Christian era. We now walk away from Zion Gate. The path we follow is close to the wall *outside* and very rugged. At the junction of the two valleys, Jehoshaphat and Hinnom, to the left of Aceldama, is the fountain of En Rogel; it is

almost buried amongst the surrounding hills. It is called the well of Job by the natives.

We now descend into a dip; this is the Tyropean valley. This valley is very difficult to be traced, for, owing to the accumulation of the ruins and rubbish of centuries, it has lost its right to be termed a valley any longer. Some parts of it are nearly if not quite filled up. It runs round Mount Zion, dividing it off from Moriah and Acra. The famous bridge, the remains of which we have already seen, spanned this valley and connected the Temple and Mount Moriah with Mount Zion. There is no need now, whatever, of a bridge in the same place. The Pool of Siloam may, perhaps, be considered in the Tyropean commencement; it is some distance down this slope on our right, you cannot see it from this. It was to this pool where our Lord sent the blind man, saying—'Go wash in the pool of Siloam; he went his way, therefore, and washed, and came seeing' (John ix. 7). Pilgrims to this day use the turbid water of this stream for bad eyes. It was not far from this that the tower of Siloam stood, and fell, killing the eighteen persons alluded to by our Lord in St. Luke, xiii. 4. Possibly it may have been a little nearer the village of Siloam, which we see just across the valley of Jehoshaphat, and looking more like a number of ruinous tombs than a village, and many of the habitations from their appearance are doubtless ancient tombs, which having long since become vacated by the dead, the living have taken up their abode therein. One can hardly imagine people living in such a place as this tomb-like village, and yet they do; it is far better suited to the dead than the living.

The Fountain of the Virgin I visited later in the day, but as it is just below where we are passing, I may as well mention it now. It is a dark cavern cut out of the rock; a few stone steps lead down to the pool, which is said to be so remarkably clear, that you cannot see when you are

standing in the water, although its coldness would soon, I should think, inform you of the fact. A subterranean channel connects this Fountain with the Pool of Siloam. Walking on, we come to the angle of the Temple enclosure. Let us pause here for a few minutes and contemplate the scene before us; it is *most* interesting, indeed even thrilling. We stand with our backs towards the Golden Gate. People talk of the barrenness of all the surroundings of Jerusalem: things have not that appearance *now*. Certainly the present was the very best period of the year to visit Syria; all looked green and fresh, and the pretty variety of wild flowers that mingled among the green, added great beauty to the now quite perfect picture. No artificial rendering could anything like equal the incomparable reality—or could it be my own overwrought feelings that so assisted in the colouring of things before me that their real beauty became magnificent? I neither say yes or no to this, but at the same time doubtless those who looked on all around with a colder eye than myself, may not have experienced the same feelings as I did, and may even now, when they read my words, consider that I am guilty of exaggeration. However, all to me was beauty, and it seemed so natural to be frequently thanking God for permitting me to visit all these sacred spots. Looking down into the Valley of Jehosaphat, one's glance travelled down the steepest slopes of Moriah. What a stony, rocky valley, and the uninitiated would naturally ask whence all those square, somewhat rudely cut slabs of stone both in the valley and up the opposite incline; there must be many thousands of them; yes, indeed, there are. That valley is the Jewish cemetery. Jews come from all parts of the globe to die in Jerusalem, their beloved city, and that their mortal remains may be placed to rest in this valley, until the last dread call awaken them, and they all be gathered together to the judgment in the Valley of Jehoshaphat. Look

then, and behold, in that valley now before you, there lie sleeping millions of the departed, thus waiting. It would, perhaps, be no exaggeration to say that the very soil itself is formed of the crumbling bones of the dead.[1] Why this valley is called 'Jehoshaphat' seems an open question. Perhaps it means the Valley of Judgment; for the Lord says, 'I will gather all nations, and will bring them into the Valley of Jehoshaphat, and will plead with them there for my people and for my heritage Israel, whom they have scattered among the nations, and parted my land. Let the heathen be wakened, and come up to the valley of Jehoshaphat: for there will I sit to judge all the heathen round about. Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision; for the day of the Lord is near in the valley of decision' (Joel iii. 2, 12, 14). This is the only place that I am aware of that is called the Valley of Decision. The stone on which it is believed that our Lord will sit to judge the earth is shown close to the Golden Gate. There is one also appropriated to the use of Mohammed for the same purpose not far from it.

This 'gathering place of nations' has been, in all ages, the great burying-ground of the Jews; they pay an exorbitant price for this privilege. The four monuments we see on the other side of the valley are the tombs of Absalom, Jehoshaphat, St. James, and the prophet Zechariah. That of Absalom is of one single stone, and is said to be as large as a two-storeyed house. I have been close up to it, and, therefore, am pretty well aware of its real size. It is doubtless a fine monument, but a two-storeyed house of the same dimensions, I fear, would make but a very poor abode even for the most humble, small-minded individual.

As a party of us rode past it in the afternoon I observed

[1] By a Mohammedan tradition, the Moslems also bury their dead here, believing that Mohammed will come to judge them in this valley at the last day.

a heap of stones close by; it seems that they have been so collected from the custom of passers-by throwing a stone at the tomb, to vent their feelings of displeasure towards Absalom for treating his father David so cruelly, and being such an unnatural son as he was. In 2 Sam. xvii. and xviii. we shall find the whole story, how that Absalom fought against his father, and how that he came to an untimely end, caused by his long hair catching in an oak, and then his being shot while in that awkward position. In spite of his wicked conduct what intense feeling his father evinced when the news of his son's death was brought to him (xviii. 33), 'And the king was much moved, and went up to the chamber over the gate, and wept: O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!' What intense love, and towards a son too who would, had he the power, have probably taken his fond father's life. Absalom's tomb is ornamented with twenty-four semi-columns of the Doric order, supporting a triangular pyramidal top. No entrance to the sepulchre has been discovered; it is possibly one solid block of stone. The next tomb, that of St. James, is hewn in the rock itself, the face is open, with two pillars in the frontal. The third is Zechariah's; it is a square block with a pyramidal top, and stands within a small compartment cut for it in the rock. Lastly (but it should have been firstly, as it stands first of the four,) the Tomb of Jehoshaphat, or perhaps I should say his reputed tomb. Its portal is ornamented. The sepulchre itself is, I understand, subterranean, and is in no way remarkable. The chief interest in these lasting monuments is the probability that, with the exception of the Tower of Hippicus and themselves, not a building stands in unchanged form, in or about Jerusalem, that our Lord's eyes rested upon. Two, if not three, of these tombs were ancient even in His day. And now we must move on; we may not linger, there is much to see and notice, all

the spots around us are teeming with the greatest interest. There is Gethsemane, and there the Mount of Olives. I visited the sorrowful garden twice later in the day. At present, then, we will cast only one lingering glance at it and the old olive trees within the enclosure and pass on our way.

The walled-up gate we are passing is the Golden Gate, and it is supposed that it was through this gate that the King of Kings rode in humble triumph on his way from Bethany and so shortly before His death. The gate is doubtless ancient; it has a double arch of Roman architecture, closed up with Saracenic stone-work. I have examined hurriedly both the inside and outside; the structure is very massive and must have been a fine piece of work in its day. Tradition tells us that through it the Christians will again enter the city in triumph. The masonry is large and massive, but the heavy unsparing hand of time has worked destruction among its columns and arches.

Just before reaching this spot, I was somewhat startled by the sudden apparition of an Arab, whose bearing I did not at all like. It is more than probable that he would have attacked and robbed me had he not perceived I was ready and well able to resist. I observed my friend had one hand concealed beneath his garments as if grasping either a pistol or a dagger. I kept my eye well on him. The silent lonely region, with the homes of the departed around us, could hardly have been better suited for murder and robbery. Who, here amongst these wild rocks and ancient tombs, could come to the rescue, and most certainly nobody was at hand to render assistance, had it been required, which it was not. If game there was to be, it would be man against man, and why should I dread a single antagonist, when the chances were much in my favour? My weapons I could depend upon, while perhaps he, the robber, had only an ancient flint-lock pistol and a dagger. I had been warned, and I knew it was not safe to wander

about *alone* without arms ; consequently I was prepared for emergencies. I drew my Sharp's repeating pistol, a very small but deadly weapon ; I carried also a dagger in my stick. The pistol didn't seem to awe very much, and the individual apparently tried to keep at my back. I threw out the dagger. I was therefore armed at all points, and it may be most fortunate for me I was. I had some valuable property about me in the shape of a gold watch, money, &c. I should, perhaps, have been forced not only to have handed these over, but also the very clothes I wore, which, of course, would have caused me considerable personal inconvenience. I watched the movements of my friend very narrowly, but had some difficulty in preventing his getting behind me, however I dodged him until reaching St. Stephen's Gate, where a Turkish soldier kept guard. All Arabs are robbers, and it is a very necessary precaution to be always armed if one wishes to take solitary rambles outside the walls of Jerusalem ; the very act of carrying arms precludes the necessity of using them ; for instance, I am told that one of our officers while walking alone outside Jaffa, had demanded of him backseesh by three men, who sprang from the road-side ; he drew his revolver and said 'emshee' (be off), and they did so without a word. Please excuse this slight digression.

We have reached St. Stephen's Gate ; let us enter the Holy City by it—never forgetting to raise the hat in crossing its sacred threshold. It was through this portal, that the Holy Saint, Stephen, was dragged to martyrdom. How vividly can we imagine and picture to ourselves the dreadful scene, as for a few moments we pause under this arch—'Then they cried with a loud voice, and ran upon him with one accord, and cast him out of the city and stoned him,' He, good holy man, 'calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. And he kneeled down and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge.

And when he had said this he fell asleep.' (Acts vii. 57–60.) Why this tear trickling down my cheek as I repeat these words; he, by following the steps of his Master, has gained a crown of life, that very Master who said when dying, 'Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.' O, *what* a lesson there is contained in these few words for every one of us!

Close to the gate inside is the arch called Ecce Homo, where it is said that Pilate showed our Lord to the multitudes, 'Behold! the Man!' Here on the left is the Pool of Bethesda, so named from the supernatural and healing properties possessed by its waters. There is no water in it now, it is quite dry. Dr. Bannister gives its dimensions as 150 feet and 40 feet broad. I did not observe any remains of the five porches or porticoes in which the sick waited for the troubling of the waters by the angel.[1] It is said by Tertullian that the miraculous powers of the waters ceased after the rejection of the Messiah by the Jews. This pool has a melancholy and great interest attached to it from the fact of its being a fragment of the primitive Jewish architecture, and, it is said, the last remnant of Jerusalem as it appeared in the days of Solomon. So that we have now seen really a very great curiosity. The entrance to the Haram (Mosque) enclosure being but a few yards distant, I attempted to cross it, thinking to cut off a large corner, but a soldier running one way and some one else bawling out from another, I soon had to relinquish the attempt. So we must follow the rough, broken, and sombre Via Dolorosa. It was not until this morning that I understood the difficulty for a stranger to find his way about the streets of Jerusalem. One feels almost as if he were a fly become entangled in a spider's web.

[1] Being at this time without a guide, I unfortunately did not observe the remains of the two porches which were pointed out to my companions.

The windings and crossings of the many narrow streets, lanes, blind alleys, passages, &c., are enough to cause confusion to the clearest of brains, to say nothing of a muddled one like mine. They are a complete network.

Via Dolorosa, be it remembered, is not a straight street by any means; otherwise it may be I should not have got into the maze and bewilderment I did. For some distance past the Governor's house all was fair sailing enough, but shortly afterwards it became far otherwise. But I will not weary you by describing how I lost myself and how I found myself again. I could not speak Arabic, and of course the one great difficulty was to ask the way and to be understood. I tried a little French, but of no avail; I at last pounced upon the words 'Yafa de Porta,' meaning Jaffa Gate; and thus, by and bye, I found myself close to the Mediterranean Hotel, and then of course found my way without difficulty to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre; and pretty tired I was after my morning's ramble and adventures. But still there was a great deal to be accomplished during the day.

This long day's rambling in and about Jerusalem I wish modestly to hold up as an example as to what may be done and accomplished by early rising. I felt of course during my short stay in Jerusalem the great and inestimable value of time, and, had I *wished*, I think I could hardly have remained in bed later than I did during these three memorable days; the thought alone of being actually in the Holy City was enough to tumble me out of bed.

My daily morning visit to our Lord's Tomb was necessarily always short; for, on account of the numbers waiting their turn to enter the little chamber, I could only be afforded time to say either the Lord's Prayer or the Thanksgiving. This morning I had with me a large number of rosaries, crosses, crucifixes, &c., &c., which I had brought with the object of sanctifying by placing on the Tomb of Jesus. One sees many people bring articles of this descrip-

tion for the same purpose. I afterwards took my treasures —now doubly so—up to Mount Calvary, and placed them on the spot marked as where 'The Cross' had stood; and by so doing I know they will be greatly prized by those to whom I wish to present them. My devotions on Calvary occupied somewhat longer than on other mornings, owing to preparation for the Holy Sacrament on the morrow. It was indeed an inestimable benefit being allowed and able to confess to the Lord one's weakness and transgressions on the very mound where He died for mankind. Such a blessing in all probability will never again be presented to me, and may the solemnity of the present occasion for ever be deeply and indelibly impressed upon my mind during the remainder of my lifetime! From the Church of the Holy Sepulchre I went to purchase photographs in Christian Street, a street noted for such things. The shop I patronised faces Palmer Street; it is kept by a European, a German I think. I spent about three-quarters of an hour there, and just before my small bundle was made up the shopkeeper informed me that our party had some time since gone on to the Mosque of Omar. I was somewhat dismayed at this, but determined to shift for myself. The hour was about 9.30 A.M. and I felt in want of a second breakfast; so returned straight to the hotel, knowing well from experience that I should be fit for little or nothing during the remainder of the day if the inner man were not looked well after. I went direct to the hotel, washed, brushed my hair and made myself look as smart as I could to meet the ladies I expected to find at the *table d'hôte* breakfast. A certain royal lady had been stopping here with her attendants, but had now left for Damascus, where, curious enough, I had again the honour of meeting her, and also making her acquaintance, but (D.V.) more of this anon. My appetite was good, and I did full justice to the omelet, bread, butter, and honey. During the previous day I had divided myself between my friends in the en-

campment and the hotel. I far preferred sleeping in the hotel to being under canvas, to say nothing of the great delight I experienced at night when placing my head on the pillow and feeling myself to be in the City of Jerusalem. Besides this, the nights had been very inclement, cold, and wet. I had dined in the encampment, returning inside the walls by bed-time. The hotel keeper did not like seeing so little of me, as I suppose it affected his interests. The head dragoman paid everything due, except extras and wine, from the 1*l.* per diem, so of course it made no difference to me, besides having to leave my messmates and sagatiate amongst strangers. Some of my messmates much envied my comfortable quarters. It had been optional at the first to any to choose either tent or hotel accommodation, and I had stood out singular in my desire for the latter. But 'we' must be off to the encampment to see whether the party have really started for the Mosque of Omar.

CHAPTER XIII.

OUR ENCAMPMENT.

What a busy spot is this David Street; early and late in the day it is crowded. The groups are of a very motley description. Turks, Greeks, Armenians, &c., interspersed of course, with a thick sprinkling of beggars; we must elbow our way through the crowd, not a very easy or pleasant business. Time, itself, ever restless, is always warning us—in the words of the London policeman—to 'move on.' The hour is about 10.30 a.m.; in an hour and a half or so the Jaffa Gate will be closed, as I suppose will also all the other gates of the Holy City, it being the Moslem hour of prayer. What ruffian and dirty looking men those are at the gate, carrying muskets with fixed bayonets; yes indeed, but, nevertheless, they are Turkish soldiers and

sentinels. They would hardly pass muster, I think, on an English parade ground.

The two roads leading from the Jaffa Gate across the gentle slope of the valley of Gihon are respectively roads to Bethlehem and Jaffa. The one bearing to the left leads in a round-about way to Bethlehem, the nearest route being by a path turning sharp to the left outside the gate, across the valley of Hinnom, and then the plains of Rephaim, where the Philistines encamped against Zion (2 Sam. v.). The road to the right goes to Jaffa, and is the one we follow for some 300 or 400 yards to the camp enclosure.

Ah yes, all have cleared out; quiet reigns throughout the encampment. What a difference there will be in some two hours hence, when all will be assembling for lunch. I was here yesterday at about that hour: the scene was something like a fair in England; but some of the characters which might be observed cruising about among the tents, were far more questionable looking. Up the slope towards the Jaffa road the horses are picketted, and of course they require a number of swarthy, roughish individuals to watch them. There are numbers of thieves about, and a bright look-out has to be kept night and day. Interspersed among the tents are merchants, on a small scale, selling all kinds of wares, 'curios' as the midshipmen call them, and curious they certainly are, if one may judge by the exorbitant prices asked. Of course all these merchants are cheats, consequently an immense amount of bargaining and beating down has to be done before an article is bought. About half the price asked, or even less, is usually near about the fair cost, and even then the vendor doubtless makes a handsome profit. For instance, you take up something and say, 'How much?' 'Wal, sare, *to you* ten shilling.' Without further parley you take up two of the same articles and hand over *ten francs* (value about eight shillings). 'Ah, sare, you are von very hard gen-tel-mans;' but at the same time the bargain is completed, and you are not *very* much '*done*.'

Here and there, through the encampment, one meets a true born and bred Israelite, in his long patchwork-looking garb, with a tall hat and a greasy curl resting on his putty-coloured and cunning face. These obliging gentlemen roam about asking the various officers if they 'vant any change' —most obliging indeed are the money-changers; they will change as small a sum as one shilling, but as to their giving the full value for it, that is the question. A very thriving trade was constantly going on in the water-bottles for conveying water from the river Jordan, but one had to be very careful not to get a leaky one, for many, if not most of them, had some invisible flaw. Blowing inside we found to be an excellent test; however, I was unfortunate in my purchase, for the bottle turned out leaky, after having carried it for many a mile; possibly a blow might have been the cause of it, as it had proved impervious to tests previously.

Close to the large dining saloon tent there was quite a little shop set up. The spot chosen for it was on a declivity well suited for the purpose. This stall had somewhat the appearance of that of a London Cheap Jack, with this difference, perhaps, that the things were not quite so cheap. However, here as elsewhere, a considerable amount of bargaining had to be done before arriving at the *last* price, and when ultimately arrived at the dearness of the articles could not be complained of. Here is a Jew selling 'gold' rings; he has a very buttery, slippery appearance, with a ringlet on either side of his face. He'll 'do' you if he can, so look out if 'yer vant er buy.' The church of the Holy Sepulchre and the mosque of Omar are stamped or cut on the rings. Our first lieutenant bought one of these *gold* rings, but not here, and when at sea had it tested by the senior assistant surgeon, who discovered there had been a *mistake*, and a brass ring had been sold instead of a gold ring. How grieved the poor Jew must have been after the 'mistake' had occurred and the ship was safe away at sea.

Here and there you meet an individual who tries to per-

suade you to have engraved in the flesh of your arm the Jerusalem arms. Several of the midshipmen are undergoing the operation. So you see 'You can pay your money and take your choice' of a large variety.

As evening advanced the encampment was cleared of these people, and a guard kept watch all night against the many thieves and robbers lurking around. Every five or ten minutes through the night, the monotonous call of 'all's well,' or something of that kind, was hailed out by the sentries in their own lingo, much disturbing the sleepers and more especially so during the still small hours. I cannot speak from experience, not having slept under canvas while encamped outside the walls; but I heard many complaints about it. However, it showed that the guard were on the alert all night, which certainly was most necessary, as robbers were very numerous.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE MOSQUE OF OMAR.

It is only within the last ten or fifteen years that the Frank has been admitted within the precincts of this 'Holy,' and certainly splendid edifice, and we were permitted to inspect it; but not without the going through of some previous formalities, which the British Consul made all right for us, as we had mentioned to him our wish to see the Mosque to-day (Saturday), during the formal visit we had paid him the previous day. A fee of some five francs had to be paid by each of us. As before mentioned, on reaching the camp we found it vacated, all had gone to see the famous Mosque of Omar. Our best plan is, then, to start off at once to the Consul and tell him of our trouble, throwing ourselves on his mercy, otherwise we shall not see the mosque at all.

Proceeding to the Damascus Gate—the shortest and most direct route to the Consul's—we fell in with a detachment of midshipmen returning from the mosque; with them was an intelligent little Greek boy who joined us and volunteered to show the way to the Consul's. We entered the gate and fortune favoured us, for walking down St. Stephen's Street we met him coming from his house up a turning to the left, his armed janissary preceding him. On shaking hands Mr. Moore expressed his sorrow for our misfortune, and hoped that we should have an opportunity of visiting the great mosque on our return from the Dead Sea tour. We, however, were far from satisfied, and thought no time equal to the present, and were most anxious, if possible, to see it now. The discussion ended by Mr. Moore very kindly giving to us the services of his janissary. In the meanwhile we were traversing a branch of the Via Dolorosa, leading to the mosque enclosure, which we entered, and saw a considerable crowd of people approaching; they turned out to be no less than the main body of our party, having finished their inspection.

How strange it seemed being permitted to enter precincts considered so sacred by the Mohammedan, and the same ground which in former years, not long past, so many had trodden at the imminent risk of their lives, simply and only for seeing and discovering the likeness of the mysterious interior of the building, from which the world in general was excluded. I remembered well how deeply interested I had been in reading accounts written by men who had themselves risked their lives for the discovery. I was now on the very spot where they had been, and about to see at my leisure, without risk, what they before me had seen at imminent peril. The thought must lend great charm to the interest that all doubtless feel who visit this place; it certainly did to me.

As to the dimensions of the Haram enclosure, I may be a

little out of my reckoning, but I think not much; —length, 1,500 feet; breadth irregular, but about 1,000 to 1,100 feet. We entered the enclosure near the Governor's house, the north-west corner; this is with good authority believed to be where the Fort Antonia once was; and this spot close to us must have been where the steps of the castle whereon St. Paul stood and made that beautiful speech to the multitude, who had dragged him from the Temple and beaten him. He here related to them the miraculous story of his conversion. (Acts xxi. and xxii. are both well worthy of perusal for the speech.) Would that I could pause a little and discuss, if only for a few minutes, these two beautiful chapters, but the ever-recurring words, 'move on,' will insist upon staring me in the face, and besides I feel that I have so much yet to write, that I think I had better hurry forward, so you will kindly excuse me, will you not?

Fort Antonia was a very ancient building. Its origin seems uncertain, at least as far as my limited information goes; it had previously been called 'The Tower.' Herod repaired and strengthened it, and it was he who gave to it its name, in honour of his friend Mark Antony. The fort must have occupied the entire side of the enclosure. The range of buildings which now take up this space, stretching from where we stand to St. Stephen's Gate are, I understand, colleges of dervishes, and public schools and buildings in connection with the Mosque.

Nearly in the centre of the enclosure is the platform occupying the summit of Mount Moriah. On this platform stood successively the temples of Solomon, Zerubbabel, and Herod. An elegant gateway leads on to the platform. Here we were made to take our boots off, slippers or other coverings for the feet being supplied for a small amount of bacshish; indeed, the demand for bacshish seems constant. I understand the sight was a very amusing and laughable

one when all the midshipmen arrived at the platform—the taking off of boots and shoes, and the scramble after the inadequate supply of slippers; of course numbers of the midshipmen had to go without, and walk over the cold polished stones in their socks. I regret having missed the amusing scene.

The platform on which we now stand is paved with marble, or apparently so; the stones bear a smooth polish, but it is said by some that they are not actual marble. The question as to who built this splendid mosque is an open one. It is said that it was built by Caliph Omar A.D. 637, but by what authority I know not. As we advanced along the platform a fine piece of work was pointed out, and called the Throne of Solomon, where he used to sit in judgment. Perhaps it was here where he so cleverly decided the very knotty question of the child, when the two women claimed to be the mother of it; the proposition of dividing the child and giving to each disputant a half, soon proved which was the real mother. The pulpit close here is very elegant as a piece of workmanship, but I know of no historical interest respecting it. The mosque, or as it is sometimes called the Dome of the Rock, is built over a mass of unhewn rock, which is the summit of Mount Moriah, and probably near the spot, if not the actual place, where Abraham prepared the altar and was about to sacrifice his son when his hand was stayed by the Lord, and the ram caught in the thicket was offered in his son's stead. The very thicket (?) is still shown, but it has been removed to another part of the city. Several of us saw it, and, doubtless, what was pointed out to us as 'the thicket' would be well adapted to the purpose of entangling a ram by his horns should he attempt to pass through it. But at the same time I *must* state that the person who would believe that this is the veritable thicket would be credulous indeed.

There are four doors at the opposite points of the com-

pass leading into the mosque. The south is the principal entrance, and has a porch supported by marble columns. 'The dome is sustained by four great piers, and has twelve arches which rest on columns.' On entering, the gloom that shrouds the noble edifice is very deep; but one becomes gradually used to it. In the centre of the building is an enormous mass of rock, railed off by high gilt iron railings, to keep pilgrims off, I understand. Over this mass of native rock hangs a canopy of striped silk. Two narrow corridors or aisles run round the entire building, divided off by sixteen or more Corinthian marble columns. The stained-glass windows are incomparable, and the profusion of mosaic work very imposing and very beautiful, but the gloom veils much of the magnificence of the mosque from view. There are fifty-six of the stained-glass windows.

I find to give such a description of this building as I could wish is beyond my very limited powers: my visit to it was far too short for me to attempt to do it justice on paper. The beautiful variegated marbles, &c., &c., are much inclined to bewilder the visitor, who has only an hour or so to spare for inspection. Such a vast amount to see and carry away in one's remembrance, necessitates not only a far longer visit than one hour, but also careful notes on paper; and not a single note, as previously remarked, did I take of any kind during my sojourn in the Holy Land. However, my slender description of the Mosque of Omar will be no loss to the public, when they have such able writers to refer to as Catherwood, Williams, Bartlett, Fergusson and others, who have gone so deeply and cleverly into the subject. The Mohammedan mosque keeper showed us round, lighted taper in hand. The dome over the rock might be about sixty-six feet in diameter, formed mostly of carved wood, but the gloom prevents a very accurate inspection. The rock itself is irregular in form, and occupies most of the space beneath the dome, and consequently of

the whole building. This rude, unpolished mass of limestone rock is supposed to have been where the Holy of Holies stood in the Temple, within which was the visible glory of God. Please don't mind the trouble, but turn to and read Ezekiel x. 4, 18 and 19; also xi. 23. We are next taken round the rock, and stop at a place where, it is said, is the imprint of the five toes of Mohammed; this is carefully guarded by cage work; the light was thrust in, but I could see nothing that would answer to anything of the kind described. We were next led down a few steps, and found ourselves in a vaulted cave beneath this wonderful rock. Here were shown us the 'praying places' of Abraham, David, and Solomon. In the centre, on the ground, is a slab of marble, which, when the guide struck, emitted a hollow sound, clearly showing that there must be a vault or some kind of excavation below. This is called by the Mohammedans 'the well of souls.' At one time it was open—at least so goes the story and my imperfect memory of it—and people used to come here to confer with their departed friends, until a certain widow in the city divulged much of what she heard, when there was such a disturbance and noise amongst the departed down below, that the mouth of the well had to be closed by the stone we now behold. Over our heads is a deep indentation in the rock; this is said to have been caused by the head of Mohammed when attempting to ascend to heaven. He, rock and all, went up a little way, but as a certain wag has it—the angel Gabriel fortunately happening to be on the spot at the time, grasped and detained the rock in its upward course. The prints of the angel's fingers are shown where he held the rock. Mohammed then ascended *through* the rock, and there, it's plain enough, is the passage made by the prophet's body in so doing. We are now conducted to the 'Door of Paradise,' outside the cave. It is a fine green piece of marble let into the floor of the mosque; I

knelt and examined it closely, for it is quite a curiosity. I noticed several holes, which apparently had been occupied by nails; it is said that some of these were pulled out by the Devil, when he tried to enter Paradise, but was prevented by being unable to pull out the rest. Some of them, as it seems to be believed, have come out of themselves; four or five only remain, and we are told that when the last shall come out, the end of the world will be at hand. Thus, I think, we have pretty well inspected this curious and beautiful mosque, at least as far as our limited time will permit; and how its interest is added to, when we consider we have inspected what, for so many centuries, has been kept veiled in deep mystery from the eyes of Christians. The reason for it having been kept so, it is said, was from the Mohammedan belief, that if a Christian prayed therein for their expulsion from the Holy City, the prayer would have been granted.

Leaving the Mosque of Omar, we walk across to the Mosque el Aksa, at the further corner of the enclosure and looking down into the valley of the Kedron. This fountain on our right, we are told, obtained its water (it is now dry) from Solomon's pools, some nine miles away. The water was used for the many ablutions that were necessary, and also for sacrificial purposes. I shall not omit, in due course —if the Lord will—to describe Solomon's pools, for we afterwards paid them a visit.

We entered the smaller Mosque El Aksa through an archway. It is under this archway where there is a black square (marble, I think). This black stone has its peculiarities. Persons are placed at a certain distance from the stone, and are directed to proceed to it with their eyes closed and hand outstretched. Those who succeed in reaching the black stone and touching it with the finger will go to heaven, but woe to those who are not successful. It may easily be imagined that this place was the scene of

grand sport, when the large party of midshipmen and other of our officers reached it. You would see one after the other walking stealthily up to the stone with outstretched arm and apparently closed eyes; but, from information which I afterwards received (for I was not present during this very exciting scene), it seems that most succeeded in touching the stone. Was not that exceedingly satisfactory? But in the event of these notes ever being published (and who can tell *what might* happen), I wish to inform the general public in the most private way possible, and of course trusting to their honour that they will not divulge the profound secret to more of their friends and acquaintances than is quite convenient to themselves, that those who succeeded in touching the black stone found that by the time they had reached about half way the trial was too great for them, and they took a sly peep just to put themselves in the right direction, and thus ultimately, to their own great satisfaction, succeeded in the very exciting adventure. One or two told me they had not managed to touch the stone, but then they had foiled themselves by carefully keeping their eyes closed, so *that* is soon accounted for. The amount of hilarity and fun that went on here amongst not only the juveniles of the party but also the elders, must be left to the vivid imagination of my reader.

The Mosque El Aksa, I may as well at once own myself, from my hurred visit, to be even less competent of describing than that of Omar. One reason, perhaps, may be, I did not feel so great an interest in it. There is certainly one object in or near this mosque worth just one peep, and which, by the by, was omitted to be shown to me; it is a large slab that covers a stone chest, in which, we are told, Solomon shut up the devil because he had neglected to obey his orders. Now, perhaps, this may be as good a story to tell as any to illustrate the utter rubbish to which one is obliged to listen. I do not pretend to remember or

repeat all, or nearly so, that is pointed out and described in these two mosques. It would simply be a waste of time to transcribe it, even in a journal, and I wish to make this something more than a journal.

The Mosque El Aksa consists of a nave and six side aisles. The columns and piers are irregular in size as well as architecture, some evidently being Roman, others Saracenic. Under the dome, which is very beautiful, stands the pulpit, which I examined; it is elaborately carved, the wooden gate, although very substantial, portrays great age, at least for such an article, say some two or even three hundred years old. A few yards from the pulpit stand two pillars, through which, I was informed, if I managed to pass, I should go to heaven; well, being somewhat spare in person, I managed to squeeze through. From subsequent information it seems there was also at this place great sport when our large party of officers and midshipmen visited it. I suppose the merriment and hilarity were even greater than at the other place, where the black marble is. The smaller people of the party, of course, got through easily enough. But spareness and slimness did not altogether exist amongst the older officers; it was quite absurd for a stout gentleman to attempt to press through where a thin one had to squeeze. However fortunately the Mohammedan religion had foreseen the difficulty and provided other pillars for the special benefit of stout parties; consequently everything passed off with satisfaction to all present. From here we were led into an oblong compartment, whitewashed and empty, some eighty-five feet in length, which overlooks the valley beneath (Jehoshaphat). This is the small Mosque of Omar. At the opposite end of El Aksa is the Mosque of the Mogrebins. It seems very evident, if history may be relied on, that the Mosque El Aksa was once a Christian church; but the question that presents itself to my mind is, was *this* the building, or that which is beneath the old church? for under El Aksa is what is called Old El

Aksa, to which we had to descend. It has the appearance of a lofty and extensive vault. Massive stone columns range from end to end, and some of the stones pointed out to me were of a truly gigantic size. A small amount of daylight only was admitted by an aperture in the wall over our heads. I could well have credited this very remarkable building had once been a Christian cathedral church; for it could easily be so converted at the present day. What is the history of it? Can anybody's researches inform me?

The Mosque El Aksa is also called the Mosque of the Women. They, if I understand correctly, are not permitted to enter the Mosque of Omar at all; but in El Aksa there is a place screened off especially for them. The place where Khalif Omar used to perform his devotions was pointed out to me on the right, as we passed through the mosque towards the pulpit; not that I took any very great interest in so *sacred* a spot. He was the individual who built, or is said to have built, the great mosque when he conquered the city. On leaving El Aksa we were permitted to resume our boots. From El Aksa we proceeded to the south-east corner of the enclosure, where we descended into a small square chamber, called the Grotto of Sidu Aisu, or Grotto of the Lord Jesus. The Mohammedans tell you it contains the bed or tomb (I am a little uncertain of the word) of the Lord Jesus, which is in the form of a sarcophagus, and a place was pointed out to me which I was told was His cradle. In the same chamber there are three other stone troughs designated the beds of Mary, John, and Zacharias. A subterranean chamber led from this grotto, which apparently was walled up, but we could see down into it from the steps. I think it is called the 'Berca Solymon.' From this we mounted again into the sunlight, and were conducted to the interior of the golden gate. This structure is of an exceedingly massive nature. The heavy roof is supported by three or four

pillars, which form a colonnade. I picked up a piece of the ruined stone, which, although exceedingly hard, could not and had not resisted centuries of wearing time. I looked upon this as an especially sacred spot, seeming, as it does, so probable that it was through this gate or arcade that our Blessed Lord entered in His humble triumph, ushered by the cheering enthusiastic multitude, who on that day shouted, 'Hosanna in the Highest,' and very shortly afterwards yelled out, 'Crucify Him.' 'Why, what evil hath He done?' might well be the reply and question.

I think we have now pretty well 'done' the mosque and its surroundings, so let us pay the various fees demanded and bend our steps across the enclosure towards the Pool of Bethesda and St. Stephen's Gate. There is nothing in Jerusalem that can be compared to this place; there is something green and fresh to be seen here, and, altogether, it makes a very interesting as well as pretty picture, with its two mosques, 'praying houses,' schools, and colleges. As we traverse this spacious enclosure, let our memories travel back to times past and gone, and contemplate in thought the ground, and gold glittering edifice that once stood here.

The Temple was not, as most suppose, a covered building. The Hebrew and Greek words mean a 'Holy Place.' It included several courts, in one of which stood the covered building, or 'House of the Lord.' 'The Temple, that is, the walls to the courts of the house, was built by Solomon about the year B.C. 1010. After its first destruction by the Babylonians in the year B.C. 588 it was rebuilt by Zerubbabel and Ezra about B.C. 535, with little or no change in its courts. After its destruction it was built by Herod the Great in B.C. 14, with more magnificence than before. Herod's temple was destroyed by the Romans under Titus; and two Turkish mosques now stand within its holy area. But the shape of this remarkable plot of ground remains unchanged; even the foundations of the fortifications are

as of old.' I quote from Samuel Sharpe. The first notice we have of this plot of ground is earlier than Solomon. Part of it was a threshing-floor which belonged to Araunah, which David bought of him 'to build an altar unto the Lord, that the plague may be stayed from the people' (see 2 Sam. xxiv.) I will again quote from Samuel Sharpe, whose interesting as well as instructive account of the Temple and its history I have read more than once. 'When Solomon built the House of the Lord, he so placed it that this holy altar stood in the middle of a court in front of it (1 Kings viii. 64). He probably copied the plan of some of the Egyptian temples, the simplest of which consisted of a covered building with a court in front surrounded by a wall, or colonnade.' Such is some of the information we get from Mr. Sharpe, and I feel sure it may be relied on. It was from the Court of the Gentiles that Jesus drove the money changers (Matt. xxi. 12). This was a large open court leading to Solomon's Porch, where the Apostles taught the people. Our Saviour also taught in this outer court daily (Matt. xxvi. 55). The spot would be that close to the corner where the governor's house now stands. Our Saviour being a Galilean, was probably not allowed to go beyond this court. The 'Beautiful Gate' mentioned in Acts iii. 2, where the beggar sat to ask alms, probably looked east. And I think there can be no doubt that it was by the Golden Gate, that our Lord entered the Temple every morning during the last of the Passover. 'And in the day time He was teaching in the Temple; and at night He went out, and abode in the mount that is called the mount of Olives. And all the people came early in the morning to Him in the Temple, for to hear Him' (Luke xxi. 37, 38). This must have been in the Court of the Gentiles. The mosques of Omar and El Aksa now stand within the area of the Temple. The Holy House itself of course was a covered building. There was a court in front of the house, and a yet larger one which enclosed it within

the Inner Court. The Inner Court was walled with three rows of hewn stones, and a row of cedar posts (1 Kings vi. 36), this was called the court of the priests (2 Chron. iv. 9).

These remarks have brought us to the extreme precincts of the enclosure; here we pay and get rid of the consul's janissary, who, like every one else, wanted bacshish. This one cry and everlasting appeal of bacshish is ever being dinned into one's ears everywhere; for the very smallest thing that may be done for you, bacshish is the demand; but then one gets used to the ever recurring cry and heeds it not.

CHAPTER XV.

THE CHAPEL OF THE VIRGIN AND GARDEN OF GETHSEMANE.

My being so much alone during the present, perhaps happiest hours of my life, doubtless enabled me to examine into things and subjects closer, and to think far more deeply than if I had been accompanied with say some twenty or thirty midshipmen. During many of my wanderings, my Bible was my one only close and dear companion, together with some notes I had made previously and culled from several authors; and I must confess the authors I had been so fortunate as to meet with and study, in most things I had found correct. First and foremost I should mention Dr. Thompson's 'Land and the Book;' it had opened my mind considerably. His many descriptions are most true, while he seems to hold mere effect in contempt. The edition I possess is for 1870; it is certainly very voluminous, but I have carefully read and re-read it with deep interest as well as thought. I must also mention the old standard work of Mr. Bartlett, 'Walks about Jerusalem,' published more than twenty years ago; it is very interesting and good. The many fine engravings are excellent and

true. I had also studied his more recent work, 'Jerusalem Revisited.' I cannot praise these books too highly. Dr. Bannister's 'Geography of the Holy Land' I found of great assistance and full of interesting information. May I here recommend any who intend visiting the Holy Land to study these works; there are many others of great worth, but it is these books I have to thank for nearly if not all my information. And so generally correct were they, that after perusing and re-perusing them, I could almost fancy myself, on visiting the many places described, travelling through familiar scenes, spots I had before roamed over. My roamings were not entirely solitary, for I took with me the little Greek boy, before mentioned, as a guide. I found him very useful, for it is next to an impossibility to guide oneself about by the means of any amount of previous theoretical instruction, through the many bye-paths one has to thread, and certainly quite impossible to find the way about the streets of Jerusalem without practical knowledge.

And now come along, my imaginary companion and friend, let us wend our way down to the Garden of Gethsemane,—quiet, secluded, and solemn Gethsemane. Let us take no note of anything by the way, but let us walk on in solemn silence down the steep slope of Moriah to yonder quiet garden. See, behold it, in the distance; that awful spot! and was it *there*?

I may go contrary to many very learned men, but I take my Bible and my Bible only; I wish to read no learned dissertations. Yes, I think it was there; I think that is truly 'dark Gethsemane,' it seems to me to be about the very spot. Yes, tears I welcome you, for it was there my Lord, my sweet, dearest Jesus was in an agony for me. Methinks I can almost see Him on that dark dreadful night, can almost see Him, my God, my Saviour, kneeling in agonised prayer under yon ancient olive tree. Who are

those three men, those three dark figures a little further off on Olivet; we cannot be mistaken, for surely those faces can be no other than those of SS. Peter, James, and John; a single ray of the moon breaks from behind a cloud, and falls obliquely upon them through the foliage; see them, they lie peacefully sleeping; can they not even in this solemn hour watch and pray? See that beautiful, stately, but lowly figure apart from them in prayer—those beautiful features, those loving eyes, filled with tears, gazing heavenwards. His hands are clasped and raised to heaven. The moon all at once becomes unveiled, and shines full upon *that face*; oh! such a face no words can describe. Why this tremor, why this emotion? Heart be still; why am I awe-stricken, why do my knees beat together until I can scarcely stand? Tell me, say, *Who* is That? Let us approach yet nearer, and yet nearer. Ah! listen, didst thou hear the words He then breathed? 'Father, if Thou be willing, remove this cup from me; nevertheless, *not My will but Thine* be done.' Didst thou ask who He was? He is the *Son of God*! Oh! canst thou see the look of pain on that sweet face—my adorable Lord? He is fainting. He will fall. What means that light, just there? that glory? and some person stands in brilliant, flowing robes, glistening with radiance. That is an angel from heaven; he ministers unto the fainting Lord, he supports Him. The moon is again hid, again darkened, but the brightness of the angel's garb enables us to see distinctly the features of Him, our Lord, our God. Our breath seems to leave us, we gasp, the pulsations of our heart have almost ceased. For see the agony of Him, Who now bears all our iniquities, all our sins. He is crushed; Oh! mystery—it is too much—see, the agony causes great beads of sweat to break forth on that brow; oh! yes, surely it must be, our eyes cannot be mistaken, the perspiration is dropping from Him, and it is *Blood* falling down to the ground. 'And

being in an agony He prayed more earnestly, and His sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground.' He rises from prayer, and with tottering, feeble, and painful steps, He goes to the three men who are 'sleeping for sorrow,' and says, 'Why sleep ye? Rise and pray, lest ye enter into temptation. And while He yet spake, behold a multitude, and he that was called Judas, one of the twelve, went before them, and drew near unto Jesus to kiss Him.' I need tell you no more; for you, my dear messmates and shipmates, know the rest of this awful and unparalleled story; which was accomplished, and that most fully, for you and for me. Hast *thou* ever known such love? Then wilt thou not from this moment give to Him, who so loved and still loves thee, all thy love?

We followed the rocky, rough path down the steep of Mount Moriah, which leads past the chapel of the Virgin on the left; this we visited first and before Gethsemane, because most fortunately it happened to be open, which apparently was unusual at so late an hour as the present, it being close upon noonday. 6 A.M. I was informed was the hour to come and see the chapel, as it was customary after that to close and lock it up. I believe I was the only one [1] of the whole party who managed to obtain entrance, at least I am not aware of any others who did; therefore, for fear of finding it closed on my return from Gethsemane, I descended into it at once. But, nevertheless, let us first describe our visit to this solemn garden, and then take the remarkable cavern church.

Gethsemane is now actually a garden, the eight venerable olive trees being walled in. There is more than one walled enclosure in this part of the valley, and indeed we are led to believe that in the time of our Lord there were several gardens hereabouts, which were thrown open to the public

[1] This is afterwards contradicted.

during the Passover, and it was into one of these gardens that Jesus went on the evening of His agony. The door leading into the garden is in one corner of the wall that faces Olivet. We had to knock rather hard before obtaining entrance, when a venerable monk opened unto us. Let us enter solemnly and thoughtfully while we slowly and intuitively uncover our heads. Let us speak not above a whisper, for the ground on which we stand is holy ground. Do you see that extremely old and gnarled tree at the further end of the garden on the left? It is evidently very ancient even for an olive tree, although I *have* heard that olive trees never die. Its trunk is carefully surrounded with mat-work. This is the very tree under which it is said our Lord underwent His agony on the eventful evening. It is about a stone's cast from this venerable olive that the three disciples are supposed to have slept, and in the direction of Olivet's slope. How full are our minds—full to overflowing—of the events that are said to have occurred here, as we wander about the narrow footways of the garden. As I looked around me, my impression seemed to be confirmed that this must either be the spot or very close in its neighbourhood; its position is just what I should imagine from Bible readings. Gethsemane, as a garden, and its general laying out, displays a want of taste, and is not calculated to strike the thoughtless and casual visitor with awe. The flower-beds have flowers, but nothing is tasty or in any way picturesque. The garden itself is surrounded by an ugly, high, whitewashed wall. My little Greek boy guide plucked me some twigs from one of the olive trees, and as I left the garden, the dear old monk presented me with a small bouquet of flowers. Around the interior of the stone wall are pictures let into the masonry, representing the sixteen stations of the cross, and they certainly bring before the mind very vividly the whole sad, sad story of our Lord's crucifixion and death. For the

present, let us take leave of Gethsemane, for we shall again visit it in the afternoon.

The Chapel of the Virgin is, as before remarked, close by here. A square rock or stone enclosure fronts the entrance, which is very ancient and picturesque.

The chapel itself is subterranean, and we descended to it by a broad rock staircase of some sixty steps, into the very bowels of Mount Moriah.

This underground rock church is certainly a very remarkable sight, and one that none should miss, if possible, who visit the Holy City. The excavation, possibly, is only partly artificial.

Tradition places the tomb of the Blessed Virgin here, but to my mind this seems very improbable. Indeed, I am not aware that history informs us that she died at Jerusalem, and if so, is it likely that the meek, humble mother of Jesus, who died in obscurity and poverty, should have had such an extensive and costly excavation appropriated to her for a resting-place? Tradition is often a very wonderful as well as convenient thing for placing holy spots, and I am exceedingly sceptical with regard to many of its wonderful stories. On the right of the descent are said to be the chapels and tombs of the Blessed Virgin's parents, SS. Joachim and Anna, and on the left that of St. Joseph. When we reached the bottom of the long flight of steps, a very deep gloom, in fact almost darkness, prevailed. Turning to the right we face an altar, and close to it is the reputed tomb of the Holy Virgin Mary. The interior was lit by so dim a light that I cannot pretend to be able to describe its hangings, &c. Before commencing the ascent, we were taken to a cool, delicious fountain springing from the rock. It is now close to noon, and I think it advisable to return to the noonday breakfast, feeling well satisfied with the amount we have seen and done during the forenoon and the early morning. Up the steep ascent which

we climb to St. Stephen's gate, some seem to think the torch-light procession led our Lord on the evening of His betrayal, but I am more inclined to think it wended its way close along the now dry bed of the brook Kedron and ascended from the valley of Jehoshaphat to Mount Zion. About one hundred paces or so down the slope from St. Stephen's gate is shown a small hollow place in the rock, where it is said the martyrdom of this brave and holy saint was accomplished. The spot is well chosen, for one would naturally imagine the event to have occurred close here.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE STREETS AND GATES OF JERUSALEM.

THE dear dirty old streets of sweet Jerusalem seem, at least some of them do, to be getting quite familiar to me, for already I have wandered much amongst them. Perhaps I could not choose a better opportunity than the present, while meandering through their many windings and intricacies from St. Stephen's Gate to the Mediterranean Hotel, to say a few words about them.

Jerusalem, according to Dr. Bannister, is exactly $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles in circumference; by Sir F. Henniker it is 3 miles (roughly). I have made the circuit of the walls outside and should say that both these statements must be very near the mark. Jerusalem is a Turkish city, and unlike anything in Europe. The inhabitants of an European town covering the same amount of mileage would, perhaps, be but little over one-third the number of those crowded within these walls.

The reason is evident. It is, that the streets are very narrow, with a mass of houses squeezed together in a small space. There is no such thing as a wheeled vehicle in Jerusalem of any kind whatever—not so much as a wheel-

barrow—the streets are unsuited to anything of this nature. The paving of the streets is of the roughest description, and much have I suffered, when tired from a long day's rambling, in having to walk over the sharp, angular-edged and broken stones. There are seven gates to the city, three of which are closed, being walled up. The Jaffa Gate is the important one, for through it all or nearly all commerce enters and the traffic is constant, what with the strings of camels, mules, &c., that are ever passing and repassing. To the north of the city is the Damascus Gate. Passing the Grotto of Jeremiah on the left we come to Herod's Gate, which is walled up; we walk on, pass Jeremiah's prison, turn the sharp angle of the walls proceeding south, reach St. Stephen's Gate; further south is the Golden Gate, walled up, but formerly leading into the Temple enclosure. Going on round the angle of the enclosure, close to El Aksa, is the Dung Gate, closed. Crossing the Tyropean valley we reach the seventh and last gate, that of Zion. The streets, with but few exceptions, are short, narrow, and crooked, especially the long one called Via Dolorosa, which runs from St. Stephen's Gate right through the city. Passing the church of the Holy Sepulchre and reaching the Latin Convent, it is very difficult to trace this street, it being so crooked and winding, making one often fancy he has lost his way, and not in the Via Dolorosa. It is from end to end dark and gloomy, being frequently at intervals covered in with heavy arches. Next to the Via Dolorosa, I suppose David Street, Christian Street, and Temple Street, may be classed as amongst the most important. David Street leads from the Jaffa Gate, running into Temple Street, which is a continuation of it. On leaving the Mediterranean Hotel, and walking down David Street away from the Jaffa Gate, one comes to Christian Street, which is the first turning to the left; this leads towards the church of the Holy Sepulchre. I find that Dr. Thompson, in 'The

Land and the Book,' calls this the street of the Patriarch, but I was assured on the spot that this was an error. Of course, I do not wish to hold up my opinion against that of such a man as Dr. Thompson, I wish simply to state what I was informed. Christian Street is apparently the chief one for shops and bankers. The street of St. Stephen passes through the markets to the Damascus Gate; Zion Street is a continuation of it. The street leading through the Armenian Convent to Zion Gate bears no name as far as I am aware. There are, besides these, hosts of streets and bye alleys, which I found to my cost, having been twice, for a short time, lost in them. The streets of the bazaars, as is usual in Eastern cities, are mostly covered in by rude matting spread across from house to house in order to ward off the burning rays of the sun. The inhabitants of Jerusalem are, I should think, fully 25,000 or 30,000, although I find them estimated at much less by a statistic of a few years back; but I suppose it is most difficult, if not impossible, to arrive at a correct estimate. At the time of our visit the Holy City was burthened by many pilgrims, it being Easter-tide.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE MEDITERRANEAN HOTEL.

I THINK this hotel merits a word in passing. It needs no advertising, for it is well known to be the best in Jerusalem; all travellers give it credit for bearing the palm. Of the Damascus hotel, and the hotel kept by Mr. Zamit of Malta, I have no personal knowledge. The terms, I believe, are lower, but their comforts and their position in the city are not equal to the Mediterranean Hotel. When there is an overflow of visitors, of course the surplus are obliged to take refuge in them.

The Mediterranean Hotel is a very fine, roomy, and what is far more important than all else, a clean, well-kept house. The prospect from its roof is a picture worth beholding, and once seen cannot be easily forgotten. The bed-rooms surround a gallery, with the sky only for its covering; the upper portions of the bed-room doors are of ground glass, and have to do duty as windows. A curtain within draws across, enabling at will the door to be left open, so that plenty of fresh air may be admitted. The beds are, of course, supplied with mosquito curtains, which in the East are well nigh indispensable. Such things as bells in the hotels in Syria seem to be almost unknown. The universal mode of calling servants is by clapping the hands, and it appears to be very efficacious, a 'yes, sare,' being the immediate reply. The feeding, a very essential part, is very fair, as well as the general culinary arrangements, and the waiting at table is good. The people I met at the table d'hôte were agreeable, and inclined to sociability.

As is usually the case in travelling, I met here a far larger proportion of American travellers than of any other country. Amongst the travellers were several ladies from that prosperous and 'go ahead' continent. It had been quite by accident that two parties of ladies had fallen in with each other, and on comparing notes both turned out to be Bostonians, and from the city of Boston, and bound in the same direction, namely, the Holy Land: accordingly they fraternised, and the two henceforth made one party, and here they were together in Jerusalem. There were some two or three gentlemen only with them, the father of some of the younger ladies, and a brother or two. The young Bostonian lady, next to whom I had the honour of sitting at table, was very talkative and very agreeable. I was much amused in listening to her conversation. One little anecdote of hers was very entertaining, and tickled my fancy much, and that was about her uncle, General ———, who had entered the northern army as a private

soldier, but through great personal merit (I suppose) he rose so rapidly in his profession, that in *four months' time* he was a general in the army. *We* need not after *that* talk about rapid promotion in *our* services.

The Englishmen at the table were in a decided minority; there were only two or three I could make certain of without putting the question point-blank. There was the talkative and travelled Englishman, who had seen much, had much experience, and was generally well informed; at least so he evidently wished to impress upon his both willing and unwilling listeners; for to get a word in edgways, while he 'ruled the roast,' was a business. I must certainly say that as long as the festive board was graced by his presence, the palm for a wagging tongue was wholly and undoubtedly his, and he very thoughtfully took up his position at the head of the table, where he might both be seen and heard to the best advantage by 'all hands.' Near him sat an 'intelligent' young man, who made everybody's acquaintance, and wasn't at all proud, but had a very exceedingly good, though humble opinion of himself, and was never wanting for a remark as soon as the talkative gentleman stopped either to take breath, or pop something into his mouth; indeed, I trust I shall not be doing the 'intelligent' young man a wrong when I say that he was always ready to take an advantage of our talkative friend on the smallest opportunity. Next to him sat a meek and quiet young man, with just a slight touch of a greasy cast of countenance, if I may be allowed to use the epithet; mild when he did speak, which was not often, and perhaps a little given to blushing. 'Speak when you are spoken to' was apparently one of his mottoes; however, he got on very well and comfortably, as he had a friend and companion in the 'intelligent' young man. I cannot myself boast of being much endowed with the powers of conversation, but both the 'talkative' gentleman and the 'intelligent' young

man used this endeavour to draw me out. Wearing my uniform proclaimed my belonging to the naval party encamped in the valley of Gihon; hence I had to answer a number of questions relating thereto. My description of our ride from Jaffa caused much general amusement. I told them how that after the first twelve or sixteen miles, the midshipmen began to complain of the weariness of having to sit so long on mule or horseback, and how to vary the monotony, occasionally one of the young fellows would be seen riding in the reverse way, face backwards; another would be seen lying flat down on his animal's back, pretending, it may be, to obtain a short nap, and so while away a portion of the long and weary journey; while another very perseveringly practised acrobatic feats, but not getting very much further than kneeling on the saddle, the attempt to stand upright being usually if not always futile. The broad pack saddles, upon which some were perched, presented very good opportunities for little games of this sort; they were much after the same style as those at a circus; and indeed one might almost imagine, from the general appearance of some of the steeds, that they were old and superannuated circus horses, the broad reins and gaudy harness, profusely decorated with shells, considerably adding to the peculiarity of their *tout ensemble*. 'Spills,' of course, happened occasionally, but all ultimately arrived in, whole in limb and body, which is, I think, an incident worthy of record. And thus, you see, I too added my quota to the amusement of the table, and indeed one time my anecdotes of this ride so much engaged attention, that for a very short period both the 'talkative' gentleman and the 'intelligent' young man were simply nowhere; but this was not for long, and I soon once again subsided into my boots, or more properly speaking, perhaps, into conversation with the young American lady on my right. On the previous evening (Friday) our table d'hôte company had

been augmented by the arrival of another Yankee; but he did not, I think, actually put in an appearance at table until either this evening or next day. He had ridden into Jerusalem from Ramleh in company with Dr. Harris, Bishop of Gibraltar; his lordship, however, did not honour the hotel with his presence, but resided at the house of the Bishop of Jerusalem. We shall, I trust, see more of him by and by, as he joined our party in the journey to the Dead Sea, &c. &c. Friday had been very wet with heavy falls of rain, and these gentlemen had suffered considerably, especially the American, who was unprepared for anything of the kind, and was moreover an invalid travelling for his health. However, when I saw him on the following Sunday, he seemed not a whit the worse after all his fears and all his drenching. He was both very communicative and very Yankee, and rather reminded me of an old acquaintance and countryman of his, whom I met at the Cape of Good Hope some nine years ago, who came into my bed-room at the hotel in Cape Town very early in the morning, before I was up, and almost forced me to drink rum and water with him, which I well remember did not at all agree with me at such an hour, and before breakfast. However, after the harm was done, it turned out that he had mistaken my room for that of somebody else, with whom apparently he had been spending a very convivial evening. My present acquaintance was not, I believe, given this way, but there was a something in his manner that perhaps, even without the nasal twang, would tell you from whence he hailed. He had formerly been, I understand, a captain in a regiment, composed partly of cavalry and partly of infantry. I am not well versed in military matters, and was not aware before that such regiments existed, but it may be they are of the past. But time again warns me. I have finished my noon day breakfast, and must be up and doing. A walk to the encampment is the first thing, to see what is to be

the programme of the afternoon in that part of the world. I had met on my way to the hotel before breakfast some of the midshipmen, and they had informed me that a riding party was to be got under way, for some expedition or other, during the afternoon; but their information was not very complete. This would suit me very well, for I was foot-sore and weary from so much walking and wandering over rough sharp stones, and a little saddle work by way of a change would be exceedingly acceptable.

CHAPTER XVIII.

RIDE ROUND JERUSALEM AND OVER OLIVET.

When I reached the encampment, I found that my informants had not been mistaken, and that a ride of some kind or other was projected; but, as to where the riding party were bound, nobody seemed to know for certain, and only surmised. A few of the midshipmen were already in the saddle; but it was evident to me that the party would not be ready to make a move for some little while to come, so I returned into the City to put on riding costume and procure my notes—notes I had made from various authors previous to arrival in Syria, and which had greatly assisted me during the weekly meetings for discussions on the Holy Land, which we had held as before-mentioned for the last three or four months, whilst voyaging from Gibraltar to Algiers, Mahon, &c., as on the various steps to the coast of Syria. I found them of great use there, and I found them very valuable now.

I had left word to have my horse saddled and ready 'against' my return. It must have been half an hour or more before I got back, and the party had started; however, a short, smart ride soon brought me amongst them.

The programme of the ride was, first, to the tombs of the

kings; from thence to Mount Scopus, Mount of Olives, the Garden of Gethsemane, the Valley of the Kedron (Jehoshaphat), the Fountain of the Virgin, Pool of Siloam, and from thence return to the encampment in the Valley of Gihon. And thus I think a pretty fair afternoon's ride was cut out for us. I was much delighted with the arrangement, and could not have wished it to be more complete.

We followed the road outskirting the walls as far as the Damascus gate, and then branched off into the road to Nablous (Shechem). The pathways leading to these ancient rock-tombs were rough in the extreme. The so-called 'Tombs of the Kings' is the most remarkable work of antiquity of the kind we saw at Jerusalem. We dismounted at a trench sunk in the rock, with a massive wall on either hand. The outside of these truly wonderful excavations is not striking, and looks like an uneven entrance to an ordinary cavern. There are, however, the remains of carvings which perhaps may somewhat give the idea of great taste in that art in days gone by; but as time has been at work with his destroying finger, an accurate opinion can hardly be formed. The numbers of thousands of years that have elapsed since this extraordinary work was accomplished would be difficult to even estimate, and for my unlearned head impossible. The façade was originally supported by two pillars, but I did not observe their remains. Candles were lit, and we entered by a small low doorway on the left; going down an incline we entered a square rock-chamber very neatly excavated. We were also conducted into other such chambers; all round these square apartments are cut, at intervals, doorways all neat and prim like the chambers themselves; these lead into other compartments of the same kind. Our guide informed us that these excavations extended for one mile, and that there were other chambers below where we stood; but I know not, and will not vouch for the correctness of this in-

formation. Our party however soon became surfeited with exploring, and longed for the open air.[1]

The question of course presents itself, who were these kings? We must not, I think, imagine these rock-hewn tombs to be those of the Kings of Judah, for we are told they were 'in the City of David,' so *that* is pretty conclusive that Mount Zion contains them. The enigma is a hard one, indeed almost as hard as the rock itself from which they are cut, and that is extremely hard. However, we have seen a very wonderful sight, so let us be content and remount our horses, without useless discussions; for perhaps the more we argue and surmise, the further shall we be from the real facts of the case.

We had been over some rough ground in the vicinity of Jerusalem, but that which we were now riding over surpassed anything of the kind we had yet seen. Shortly after leaving the Tombs of the Kings, we journeyed over the ground occupied by the vast encampment of the Romans under Titus; but the nature and roughness of the journey precluded any very deep thinking, for nearly all our care and attention had to be devoted to our horses. Crossing the dry bed of the Kedron, our horses' heads were placed in or about the direction of Anata, and the climb up the hill of Scopus was commenced. The toil and fatigue of climbing this rugged incline was mostly on the side of our horses, and we sat their backs, patiently awaiting the splendid view from the hill top. Arrived at the summit reins were drawn and the horses brought to a stand, whilst their riders at leisure scanned the incomparable panoramic view spread out at their feet. The Dead Sea lay far away in the wilderness, apparently as still and motionless as death.

[1] At the doorway of these tombs we were shown an example of the manner in which the entrances to such tombs were closed, viz., by a rolling stone, like a grindstone, moving in a groove across the doorway or passage.

Yes, there lies the vast expanse of water, noble in its stillness, seemingly within a short ride; but be it remembered that here on Scopus, we are at an elevation not far if at all short of 3,000 feet *above* the level of the Mediterranean, while the silent sea before us lies in a plain 1,300 feet below its level. 'Lofty mountains enclose it with prodigious grandeurs,' are the words of a traveller here before us, and they help to describe a solemn picture such as I had never before seen and probably shall never behold again. The whole scene is most impressive. 'It is the Creator's own conception realised of desolation absolute, hills above hills, sinking far down to the Dead Sea, with Edom and Moab beyond,' as a learned writer describes it. This, the 'Wilderness' of Judea, was doubtless *the* 'Wilderness' in which our Lord and Saviour was led by the devil. Yes, it must have been amongst those melancholy hills, that our suffering Redeemer bore the great temptation and fast for forty days and forty nights, and there 'the Prince of darkness was baffled at every point, and his accursed dominion overthrown, and that for ever.' The silvery thread of the meandering River Jordan is there winding through that desolate country, but the verdure on its banks and distance shrouded it from my, perhaps, rather faulty sight, although some seemed to think they could see it. However, there it is, rushing on in its rapid course until losing itself in the Sea of Death.

We rein our horses round, and *there* is the Holy City of Jerusalem—the City of the Great King spread out in detail before us. But still the view of it is not *quite* so grand as that presently obtained from the Mount of Olives (proper, for the whole range of these hills bears the name of 'Mount of Olives.') We walk our horses down a dip. It was close here that, as Titus advanced with his Roman legions and surmounted the hill Scopus, the first splendid view of the then magnificent city burst full upon him and his

army; awestruck indeed must he have been at the gorgeous, almost solemn sight—the Temple resplendent with its golden summits glittering in a burning Eastern sun. Our horses rise from the dip, and we are on the for ever and ever famous Mount of Olives, famous until the world shall be no longer. He, the Son of God, made this holy hill His frequent home. It may be, that it was under some of those old olives down the slope He pillowed His weary head, for *He* had no home here. 'Foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man hath not where to lay His head.' The olive trees are not so thick as they once were. But, *most truly*, it was *here* amongst these shades that Jesus so often retired with His disciples, weary and worn out, after a long day of goodness and love, healing the sick and preaching in the Temple; and see yonder across the hill is a path or camel road-way, worn in the rock,—that path leads to Bethany. Oh! it *must* have been by it—for I can find no other that goes there—that He so often crossed the hill to visit His friends residing in the quiet little village of Bethany—the family of Lazarus, in the bosom of which loving little circle He was wont to retreat for a while from the turmoils and troubles of the world, of the unkind cold world which despised and buffeted Him, the Son of the living God. Yonder it was—yes, it may *possibly* have been where that small building is, called the Chapel of the Prediction, a little way down the slope of the hill—where 'Jesus said unto them (His disciples who had just called His attention to the grandeur of the magnificent buildings of the Temple), See ye not all these things? Verily I say unto you, there shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be cast down.' Again, 'And as He sat upon the Mount of Olives, the disciples came unto Him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be, and what shall be the sign of Thy coming, and of the end of the world?' Our

Lord then unfolds to them the dreadful story. He further says afterwards, 'When ye therefore shall see the *abomination* of desolation spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, then let them which be in Judæa flee into the mountains;' and has not this prophecy been fulfilled, have we not seen that idolatrous images were actually set up over, and stood on, and marked for many years the two most 'holy places' on earth, namely, the Tomb of our Lord, and the Mount on which 'He yielded up the ghost,' and died in expiation of the sins of the whole world! Oh! how deeply interesting to the *Christian, he who loves Christ*, is this Mount called Olivet. Over yonder on Zion's hill it was (may we not so believe?) where 'Jesus took bread, and blessed, and brake it, and gave to them and said, Take, eat; *this is my* Body. And He took the cup, and when He had given thanks, He gave it to them: and they all drank of it. And He said unto them, *This is My Blood.*' ('Lord, I believe, help Thou mine unbelief.') 'And when they had sung an hymn they went out into the Mount of Olives.' Ah, yes, truly, there *is* no hill like unto Olivet; it was *His* home, and amongst its olive groves has he, overcome and wearied with mortal fatigues, slept.

We once more draw rein and halt on the hill's summit by the Church of the Ascension, within which tradition places the exact spot where our Lord ascended to heaven, and even the print of His foot on the rock; but as this is so entirely opposed to Scripture, I would not dismount to go inside the church, and did my best to persuade my companions to keep their saddles also. None of our party went in. St. Luke says that 'Jesus led out His disciples as far as to Bethany, and He lifted up His hands and blessed them. And it came to pass, while He blessed them, He was parted from them and carried up into heaven.' As far as to Bethany, why, this is not half-way there, and indeed out of the direction altogether. I see not even how

our Lord could have gone to Bethany at all this way. The old time-worn rocky pathway or camel road lies between this and the other rising part to the Hill of Offence. It is hardly conceivable how even 'tradition' could have so far erred as to place the site here. The words of St. Luke, in his Acts of the Apostles, are also very plain; could 'tradition' have read them? He says, alluding to the disciples immediately after our Lord's ascension, 'then returned they unto Jerusalem, from the mount called Olivet, which is from Jerusalem *a Sabbath day's journey*.' Now ask any Jew you please what is the extent of 'a Sabbath day's journey,' and I think you will find it to be fifteen furlongs, or *about* two miles. Again, in St. John also, xi. 18, the Apostle says, 'Bethany was nigh unto Jerusalem, about fifteen furlongs off. I have journeyed from Bethany by the old track to Jerusalem, and also from the spot on which we are now halting. I should therefore think that Bethany is full two miles distant, if not more, while from here it cannot be much over the mile. We need, I think, no further proof to convince ourselves of the entire fallacy of the spot chosen by 'tradition' as that of the Ascension.

How strange it seems, notwithstanding the many revolutions the country has undergone within the last two thousand years, that the olive still grows on this mount, called by the Jews Olivet eleven hundred years before the Christian era. The tree from which the hill was first named may even now be said to flourish on it, although truly the groves are scanty indeed to what they once were, and when they afforded shelter to our Lord by night.

The cavalcade moved on, and down the hill which is the centre of the three mounts which form the Olivet range, extending for, I suppose, two or more miles; the first being Scopus, the centre Olivet (proper), the third the Hill of Offence, so called, it is stated, because it was here that Solomon offered up sacrifices to the idolatrous gods of his,

and so gave great offence to the one great God, who had done so much for him. About forty years before this idolatrous profanation of the Mount of Olives, his afflicted father, David, being driven from Jerusalem by his son Absalom, came, it is said, to this same eminence, to present a less offensive sacrifice, and 'standing upon the very spot, the aged monarch gave to heaven the offering of his wounded spirit.'[1] How touchingly the prophet (2 Sam. xv.) describes the picture—'And David went up by the ascent of Mount Olivet, and wept as he went up, and had his head covered (his face, possibly); and he went barefoot: and all the people that was with him covered every man his head, and they went up weeping.'

A very splendid view of the Holy City is obtained not far from the top of this hill (the Hill of Offence), but the finest of all is that a short distance down, where valleys and all around become included in a view incomparable to anything else in the world. Pictures, photographs cannot truthfully delineate what is beheld. Of the two grand views of Jerusalem, the best, I am of opinion, is the one obtained on the road from Bethany, near which must be the spot where Jesus, 'when He beheld the city, wept over it.' It is on such occasions as the present that I feel the incompetency and weakness of my own poor pen to convey to the minds of my readers a correct idea of so grand a scene. I feel it to be far beyond my powers. I cannot even describe as I would the flood of feeling with which I was filled when, a few days since, our large party, then full one hundred strong, rode along that rode from Bethany on the return from Jericho, when suddenly the whole city of Jerusalem, in its still *apparent* splendour, burst upon the scene like a magic picture unveiled. Let us quietly and soberly behold the sight. A general halt is called and

[1] Dr. Clark.

all stop to gaze. The modern City of the Great King is before you. Thinkest thou that thou canst imagine what the ancient city was like? 'He beheld the city, and wept over it. O! Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not.' Yes, I *think* I can imagine somewhat of the scene that was spread out before the eyes of our Lord from *near about* this very spot. I think I can see yonder the Temple with its glittering golden roofs, surrounded by its capacious courts; and see, on yon extensive sloping hill, Mount Zion —see its crowds of palaces and mansions reaching down to the very valley. How massive and grand are they, built as if to resist all time; and see *there* runs the deep valley of the Tyropean, passing the angle of the Temple enclosure. A truly regal bridge spans the valley, joining the Temple on Mount Moriah to kingly Zion—'the joy of the whole earth.' See the fertile, peaceful valleys and hills surrounding this beautiful and wealth-crowned Mount, clothed with the greenest fertility, while happy flocks are feeding amongst the luxuriant grass, watched by their drowsy shepherds. See the refreshing, gaily-running brook Kedron as it sparkles and gurgles along the valley. *All*, ALL, looks bright, happy, and smiling; and the noble, kingly city seems sleeping in peaceful grandeur, surrounded by this earthly paradise. Ah, there is a change. Suddenly a mist seems to overspread the scene, the view fades, vanishes, and another totally different picture is before us. More than eighteen hundred years pass between the two '*dissolving*' views, for the present is also a fading picture. O, sad, sad change! Let us now awake and open our eyes, and behold the picture as in reality presented to us. Holy City, where, oh, where is all thy grandeur and magnificence? Where the mansions of yonder hill? All is gone,

all laid low, even with the dust, and thy children have been massacred within thee. Oh, why this fearful desolation, this awful destruction? See the once proud and gorgeously apparelled citizen, now wandering about his own miserable city, in filth and rags, the despised. But let us, as well as we are able, describe the scene spread out before us. From this spot the narrow dirty streets do not mar the view of the city. And even now, it still looks grand; a compact town seated on a noble table-ground, with deep and in some places precipitous slopes, which almost reach to its very walls. Almost facing us is the Mosque of Omar, with its fine dome rising conspicuously above all else in the city. It occupies nearly the centre of the fine fresh and green enclosure. Nearer to us, and close to the wall of the enclosure, by an old closed gate (the Dung Gate), is the Mosque el Aksa. Close to the angle of the wall are the remains of the ancient bridge. We cannot, we think, from here, see the Wailing-place. At the further end of the enclosure, the eye travels to where the Fort Antonia once stood, in all its massive strength. Its foundations only remain, and that white structure built over it is the Governor's house. Looking beyond this, the limits of Mount Moriah, the eye wanders over a compact mass of houses. This is the modern part of the city. The eye, travelling to the west, and still among a maze of houses, at last rests on two domes. One is modern, and glitters with stripes of gilt; the other is ancient, indeed approaching the ruinous. The glittering dome shelters the tomb of our Lord, while the other one is over the Stone of Unction. Here on Akra we see, it may be, an occasional tower, or church, or convent, standing out from among the other buildings. The Latin, Greek, and Coptic convents are close by on the west side. We cannot trace the Tyropean, although we know where to look for it; it cannot now be called a valley, being almost filled with ruins and rubbish.

Houses seem to cover every inch of it *within* the walls. That square frowning tower, with the Turkish flag flying from its summit, is the citadel, the Tower of Hippicus. Close to it is the English Church, and almost adjoining the Syrian Convent, and all this is part of the Mount Zion. To the south of the English Church is the fine extensive Armenian Convent, almost a town of itself; it is, as a matter of course, dedicated to St. James, as before explained. To the east of this is the Jews' Quarter, squalid and wretched.

They still, however, in all their misery refuse to quit the scene of their bygone glory; for most of the city's most splendid buildings were here on Mount Zion. The wall's boundary ends before reaching the slopes of that incomparable hill; crops of grain now wave over those slopes, down into the valley of Hinnom. That group of buildings we see outside Zion Gate comprises the Cœnaculum, the reputed tomb of David, and the 'large upper chamber' where our Lord instituted that holy ordinance, '*Whereby alone we receive remission of our sins and become inheritors of the kingdom of heaven.*' It was also, it is believed, within this same chamber that the Holy Ghost sat upon each one of the disciples as of cloven tongues of fire, already alluded to in the preceding pages. The deep valleys of Hinnom and Jehoshaphat, with their many thousands of graves and tombs, add greatly to the awe-inspiring picture. The whole as a picture is superb; but when one says that the view is incomparable to any in the world beside, it must be remembered that it is Jerusalem we see before us. Many great doubts though there may be about several, indeed, most of the holy sites pointed out within and without its sacred walls, there *can* be no doubt about *it*. It is the City of the Lord, and within the small space before us, man's redemption was gained by the sufferings of our all-loving Saviour. Often had *He* walked these very path-

ways, over these very hills, through these self-same valleys. I must repeat, then, with such associations, the view is incomparable; there is and can be no scenery equal to it that this world of ours could produce.

We are at present winding down the opposite declivity of Olivet, and only left it, in imagination, for a time, to complete a description that would not be quite so full in its details from this point.

The 'place called Gethsemane' lies at our feet. We dismount at its gates, and for the second time to-day I visit it. The old Latin monk, as before, is summoned, the low door opens, and once again am I among those most ancient and venerable olive trees, hoary and old. Of course it cannot but be owned that Gethsemane is far from being what one would imagine such a place to be, or what it in reality once was. Such a garden as it now is our blessed Lord would *hardly* have chosen for retirement and prayer on that solemn Thursday evening. With its flower-beds and general arrangement it cannot be one bit the same as it was in His day; it must have been far larger than what it is now—the walls around it enclose a square little larger than is necessary to include the six or eight olive trees. To the north of this the Greeks have a garden of Gethsemane of their own, at least so I understood, which was not quite completed.

On leaving the garden of Gethsemane we went to the Chapel of the Blessed Virgin Mary, but it was now unfortunately closed. Some, if not a majority of our party, I have since learned, *had* visited this remarkable subterranean rock chapel, which lies far beneath the bed of the valley of Jehoshaphat; it was, however, a great pity that the present detachment had no opportunity of doing so. We walked our horses along by the dried-up bed of the Kedron, passing the four conspicuous tombs of Jehoshaphat, Absalom, St. James, and Zechariah, and then on to

the Fountain of the Virgin, where some of us dismounted and entered. The rocky, tomb-like village of Siloam lay on the slope of the hill to the left, and where the tower of Siloam had once stood, I suppose, was across the valley and close to the ancient walls on our right. The Pool of Siloam was next reached, while the fountain of En Rogel was some distance to the south of it, and not far from Aceldama, which lies up the Hill of Evil Council. We now skirted Mount Zion with the tomb of David above us, and the English and other Christian cemeteries close by. Across the valley at this spot lies a lasting memorial of the charitable and good Jew, Sir Moses Montefiore, of Ramsgate. It is a row of neatly built cottages for the poor Jews of Jerusalem. They look so fresh and clean and so ornamental, facing the Holy City and looking across the valley of Hinnom. I had not, unfortunately, either time or opportunity to visit them, but received a description from one who had done so. The name of Sir Moses is well known, and carries with it a long charitable history throughout the land. What numbers of his poor, suffering, starving, and wretched brother Israelites must be ever blessing his name!

How familiar, even in a short time, things and appearances become; and as we ride along Mount Zion, pass the angle of the city walls, and look towards the lower pool of Gihon, I could almost fancy I had been here for years instead of only a few days. There lies spread out the encampment, looking so natural and as if it had been there for ever so long. Jaffa Gate is reached, our horses' heads are turned to the left, and we jump from their backs on to the camping ground.

Thus had we completed our circuit of the Holy City; a most interesting ride it was, and one I shall ever remember.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE HOSPITALLERS' PALACE—A WALK IN THE CITY.

We arrived in the encampment about 5 P.M., two hours before dinner, the hour for that important meal in the camp being 7 P.M., and at my abode in the city the nominal hour was 6·30 P.M., being in reality about 7 o'clock also.

I must confess that my memory somewhat fails me here; but depend upon it, we did not throw away these two valuable hours, and to the best of my recollection, we, this evening, visited the ruins of the knights hospitallers' palace; the remains of, at one time, a very noble edifice. The street in which it is situated is a narrow one, leading from the Church of the Holy Sepulchre towards the bazaars. The description given of it by Mr. Bartlett in his 'Jerusalem Revisited'—which I have been informed is out of print—is so good, that I know I shall be excused in quoting from him, and I am sure I could not myself add in any way to it. He says, then, that in this narrow street 'stands a curious and very picturesque gateway, the external façade displaying a flattened pointed arch, somewhat similar to that at the tomb of the Virgin, while the archway beyond is round-headed, having formerly a round-arched portal, surmounted by rich historical and emblematical carving. Among the varied and curious ornaments above may be seen the Lamb, emblem of the noble order of St. John of Jerusalem, of whose palace this was the entry. Fallen are the mighty indeed, and degraded their dwelling-place; for, of all spots in the city, this is the most filthy and disgusting, owing to a neighbouring tannery and certain cesspools, which create together a stench sufficient, one would think, to breed a pestilence in the neighbourhood, and which renders a prolonged examination of the interesting relics almost impossible.'

Behind the gateway are the remains of the building.

The interior is now converted into the basest uses and not to be explored without considerable offence to the nostrils, and the fear of catching some infectious disease from contact with the wretches who vegetate in filth and misery amid the ruined cloisters of these gallant and noble knights. From the open area, a picturesque staircase ascends to a court surrounded by a cloister, from which open sundry rooms, into which it is hardly possible to penetrate for various disgusting obstructions. One large building with pointed windows—either the hall *or chapel*—is now nearly filled up with dung. This building stood in immediate proximity to a splendid group of religious foundations, thus described by Sæwilf in 1102: 'Without the gate of the Holy Sepulchre to the south is the Church of St. Mary, called the Latin, because the monks there perform divine service in the Latin tongue. And the Assyrians say, that the blessed mother of our Lord, at the crucifixion of her son, stood on the spot now occupied by the altar of this church. Adjoining to this church is another church of St. Mary, called the Little, occupied by nuns, who serve devoutly the Virgin and her Son, near which is the hospital where is a celebrated monastery founded in honour of St. John the Baptist.' The building is thus described by Maundeville, in 1332: 'Before the Church of St. Sepulchre, 200 paces to the south, is the great hospital of St. John, of which the hospitallers had their foundation. And within the palace of the sick men of that hospital are 124 pillars of stone, and in the walls of the house, besides the number aforesaid, there are fifty-four pillars that support the house. From that hospital, going towards the east, is a very fair church, which is called Our Lady the Great; and after it there is another church very near, called Our Lady the Latin, and there stood Mary Cleophas and Mary Magdalene and tore their hair when our Lord was executed on the cross.' The history of these noble knights and monks is

generally so well known, that to ponder much upon it here would perhaps be out of place. But I think there were some of the younger members of our party who apparently took so little interest in the grand remains of this old ruin, that perhaps they will forgive me if I dilate yet a little on the knights hospitallers, and my remarks will be culled from one who may be certainly considered a good authority.

'It was in the eleventh century that a few merchants from Amalphi, now an obscure but romantic town in the vicinity of Naples, but at that time famous for the enterprise of its citizens (by one of whom the mariner's compass was discovered), obtained permission of the Moslem caliphs to establish, under the shadow of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, a place of refuge for pilgrims of both sexes visiting Jerusalem. Two hospitals, one for male pilgrims, dedicated to St. John Elymon, the other to the Holy Magdalene, formed the celebrated Order of St. John of Jerusalem. Scarcely had it existed seventeen years, when a terrible irruption of the Turcomans swept Jerusalem with the besom of destruction; the Moslem troops were massacred, and the tributary Christian population, hitherto permitted to exist uneasily within the walls of the Holy City, were exposed to the most cruel outrages. Peter the Hermit, beholding the sufferings endured by his brethren, overran Europe, inflaming its chivalry to roll back the advancing tide of Mohammedan conquest; the first crusade was undertaken, and ere long Godfrey of Bouillon stood victorious upon the ramparts of the Holy City. On visiting the Hospital of St. John, soon after his conquest, he was received by the pious Gerard, who having witnessed the charity of its inmates, had devoted himself and his fortune to their service; and by his benevolent care of the pilgrims, without distinction of sect, and the extension of his bounty even to the infidels themselves, was regarded as a common

father by all the poor of the city. His example inspired many of the young nobles with a kindred spirit, who, renouncing the idea of returning to their homes, enrolled themselves among the Hospitallers. Godfrey endowed them with lands, and most of the other crusading princes following his example, the Order was soon enriched with considerable possessions both in Europe and Palestine. Hitherto the Hospitallers had confined themselves to an administration merely secular; they now, at the persuasion of Gerard, added to it a religious profession, took the three vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience, and assumed a regular habit, consisting of a plain black robe, upon which, at the side next the heart, was attached an eight-pointed cross of white linen. The Pope approving of this new Order, exempted the Hospitallers from the payment of tithes, and bestowed on them the exclusive right of electing their own superior, without the interference of either secular or ecclesiastical powers. The wealth and influence of the institution now increased apace, and they founded hospitals or commanderies in the principal maritime provinces of Europe, where pilgrims to Jerusalem were succoured and sent forward on their journey. Such was the origin of this famous Order; first merely a civil, and next a religious institution for the succour of pilgrims repairing to Palestine. But the establishment of the Latin kingdom of Jerusalem brought on a further change in its constitution. A mere handful of Christian knights, surrounded by hosts of Moslem enemies, could not afford to spare the valiant knights at present bound by a purely religious vow; and Raymond Depuy, the successor of Gerard, proposed that those who had laid down their arms should assume them again for the defence of their newly-founded and precarious state. The body of Hospitallers was now divided into three classes: the first of noble birth and approved valour were destined to military service; the second con-

sisted of priests and almoners; while a third and inferior class, who had no pretensions to nobility of origin, assumed the functions of "Frères Servans," or assistants, and as the number of the Order was rapidly swelled by an influx of youthful knighthood from all parts of Europe, it was further divided into seven languages, those, namely, of Provence, Auvergne, France, Italy, Aragon, Germany, England; a division which, with the addition of Castile, and Portugal, subsisted until the extinction of the Order, except that after the Reformation the English lodge was merged in the German. The government was a pure aristocracy, the supreme authority residing in a council of which the grand master was the chief. This Order of the Knights Hospitallers of St. John, together with that of the Templars, which not long after sprung from it, were the principal support of the Latin kingdom of Jerusalem during the brief period through which it struggled in the midst of peril and uncertainty. They presented a singular union of military valour, religious fervour, and austerity of life. Scarcely, says Vertot, 'had they laid down their arms, than they resumed, with the utmost regularity, all the exercise of their first profession. Some devoted themselves to the service of the sick, or were occupied in receiving pilgrims, while others kept their arms in order, or with their own hands mended the harness of their war horses; and during these various employments, maintained a religious silence like hermits or anchorites, a manner of life hitherto unparalleled, when without being entirely attached to the cloister nor engaged in the world, they practised in succession all the virtues of two such opposite conditions. The Templars, who so long bore the brunt of the struggle against the Saracens, were originally so called from their being lodged in the Mosque El Aksa, within the precincts of the Temple area. In the front of the porch of this mosque—it is not generally known—are buried

the murderers of St. Thomas à Becket, who died at Jerusalem upon a pilgrimage undertaken in expiation of their crimes.' [1]

After leaving this ruined palace, about which and those who abode there I trust some of us are now better informed than at the time of our visit, we went to the Via Dolorosa, where there are two or three woodwork shops, and hot bargaining soon began. We bought such things as walking-sticks, paper-knives, rulers, napkin rings, seals, &c., &c., manufactured from olive wood. One out of our number purchased a work-box, which I suppose was for some particularly loved one at home; indeed, I am in a position to confirm the supposition.

The day was now waning, a gloom overspread the Holy City, and night approached. It is only 'while it is yet day,' that out-door work can be done; in Jerusalem when the night cometh 'nobody can work.' The city is dark, intensely dark, for the light of the myriads of stars which overspread the heavenly vault above its sad streets sparkling with silvery splendour, cannot penetrate into the depth of their intense gloom. When darkness prevails the whole city seems suddenly to have fallen asleep; all is still; the just now crowded streets, with strings of camels and mules pushing their way through the turbaned and motley concourse, have vanished, and the streets are left to the prowling dogs of the city; nothing breaks the stillness of the night, but their half savage, half hungry yelping bark, or it may be the dismal howl of a jackal as the sound rolls up the steeps of Moriah, from the valley of Jehoshaphat, or it may be from yonder Mount of Olives borne from afar on the quiet oppressiveness and silent wings of the midnight air. Ah! poor city abandoned of the Lord, thy tears seemed dried for a time, and thy sobs hushed during these

[1] Overland Route.

few short hours of peaceful repose; but there is a something still, a something indefinable, that seems ever to be reminding the stranger of thy one great sin. By fall of eve I parted from my companions, who returned to the encampment, and I to the hotel, quite tired out from my long day's exertions, and glad of rest. I retired to my room soon after dinner, and wrote up my journal letter, giving in it but a very hasty review of the day's doings. My bones and limbs in general ached considerably as I threw myself on the bed, but refreshing sleep was not long in coming to the rescue, and for a few short hours I even was forgetful of being in the Holy City of Jerusalem, the City of the Great King. I had almost, if not quite, fallen asleep while breathing the beautiful words of the General Thanksgiving in our Prayer-Book, for I could not remember finishing it. How often and often did I feel that I could not be thankful enough for the goodness of Him who had brought me to His City, and permitted me to tread the very ground His well-beloved Son had so frequently walked over, and consecrated with the tread of His heavenly feet. 'And He sent His Son, His well-beloved, and Him they killed.'

CHAPTER XX.

SUNDAY IN JERUSALEM.

I AWOKE as early as usual, but feeling still the fatigue of the three previous days' exertions, I allowed myself to sleep or rather lay in thought until six o'clock, when I arose and went out to Mount Zion. How I delighted to stroll out to this lovely mount and gaze again and again upon the beautiful view from there; each day I came, each day did I wend my way down that rough and broken street to Zion Gate. To-day again was I on this hill of Zion, second only to one in this world—Olivet—Beautiful Zion, the

bygone 'Joy of the whole earth.' Three separate times to-day did I wander over that portion where the Christian cemeteries are situated. I strolled for a time amongst the silent tombs of the departed. I did not feel very well, was tired, and a little knocked up from over exertion. However, I went as usual to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre for my devotions. I could not part with that my beloved visit, for so soon would the blessing be taken from me and no longer mine. But I was very weary; my eyes and head were so heavy that on my return to the hotel I was obliged to repose for a time on my bed. Ill could I spare that half hour or so, but I gave it like a miser his gold, for I had hardly a choice, and my weariness made me late for church. The early breakfast had been cleared away by the time I made my reappearance. Some refreshment before again going out I felt bound to take, otherwise my strength I well knew would fail me, consequently this my hasty repast caused further delay. However, I despatched it as quickly as I could, and repaired to divine service at the English Church, and, as I expected, it had already commenced. Our own chaplain occupied the reading desk; the Bishop of Gibraltar sat on one side of the altar, and a clergyman, with whose name I am unacquainted, occupied the other. The Bishop of Jerusalem sat in his own pew. The church is a pretty building, and, as previously mentioned, built in the form of a cross. It would accommodate, I suppose, about three hundred persons. The present congregation, including our large party of midshipmen and other officers (all in uniform) might be estimated at upwards of two hundred. I suppose so large a number had rarely if ever collected under its sacred roof for Divine service. The altar and reredos are of the plainest. The music was very good, and the hymns chosen beautiful and exceedingly impressive, so much so that with the thoughts and overwrought feelings which crowded my brain, I was at times quite prevented from joining in the

praises of Jesus, my well beloved Lord. I had much wished to have taken a copy of these sweet verses had I the time and opportunity, which did not present itself.

The Bishop of Gibraltar preached the sermon, and then followed the remainder of the service, the most important part. This was not what many of my friends would term 'Sacrament Sunday,' but an especial celebration for ourselves; therefore, as might have been expected, nearly all the regular congregation left, a few only remaining besides a portion of our own party, and perhaps some three or four visitors. Much as I like this part of the beautiful service of our Church performed with full ritual, and although not a note of music, either vocal or instrumental, sounded during the solemn service, never had I been so impressed with its awfulness on any previous occasion; and indeed so overcharged were my feelings, that I could hardly have borne strains of music. It may be that I shall only be echoing the feelings of others when I mention my own on this one most joyful, impressive occasion of our whole lives. One's prayers, one's longings, now seemed all about to be realised; it may be, how many of us had prayed and implored our God to bring us here for this great purpose; our prayer had been answered, and here we actually are. How we all knelt there in His Holy House, in His Holy City of Jerusalem, we made our 'humble confession to Almighty God meekly kneeling upon our knees.' The words were breathed with trembling earnestness; there was a break-down here and there, and sobs, although stifled, were heard; while tears might be seen streaming from eyes to which it may be they had been unknown for years. Oh! how fervently were these words uttered—'*Have mercy upon us, have mercy upon us*, most merciful Father, for Thy Son our Lord Jesus Christ's sake: *forgive us all that is past, and grant that we may ever hereafter serve and please Thee* in newness of life, to the honour and glory of Thy name, through Jesus Christ

our Lord.'—*Amen.* Then followed the absolution. What a stillness prevailed as the bishop pronounced the words contained therein, beseeching God to have mercy upon, pardon, and deliver us from all our sins; confirm and strengthen us in all goodness; and bring us to everlasting life through Jesus Christ our Lord. Then followed those truly comfortable words, 'Come unto me all that travail and are heavy laden, and *I will* refresh you.' And *had we not* come to Him? and had He not brought us here safely so many miles to his own dear city to give us the Body and Blood of His most adorable Son to refresh our souls, on the very ground where that body had been pierced, and that blood shed for our iniquities? Oh! was it not, *was it not* too much to bear, such goodness and to such sinners as we; how indeed could we help shedding tears, the bitterest tears of our lives, for our great unworthiness and sinfulness? Oh, what *had we* done for *so much?* wretched sinners that we are. How fervently and earnestly did we make up our minds, with His help, to show forth our great thankfulness *not only with our lips but in our lives*, by giving up *ourselves* to His service and walking before Him in holiness and *righteousness all our days*, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Now did we lift up our hearts unto the Lord. 'Therefore with angels and archangels, and with all the company of heaven, we laud and magnify Thy glorious name, evermore praising Thee, and saying,—We bow our head and say, 'Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of hosts, heaven and earth are full of Thy glory: glory be to Thee, O Lord Most High.'—Amen. 'And,' in the words of Bishop Beveridge, 'certainly if ever our souls be in heaven while our bodies are upon earth, it must needs be in the singing of this heavenly anthem; when our spirits, with those of just men made perfect, yea, with the whole company of heaven, in so solemn and seraphic a manner adore and magnify the eternal God our Maker and Redeemer. And now, if ever,

our minds must needs be duly prepared to receive the blessed Body and Blood of our dear Lord; and therefore, the minister having first acknowledged our unworthiness of so great a mercy, and prayed to God to assist us with His grace to receive it worthily, he then saith the prayer of consecration. And now there is nothing said or done but what puts us in mind of something or other whereupon to employ and exercise our faith.' When we hear the words: 'Who in the same night that He was betrayed took bread,' how plainly we can see Him in that large upper chamber surrounded by His disciples, only a short distance it may be from this very place on Mount Zion. See, the bread *is broken*; we see His agonised body pierced and nailed to the cross on yonder mound of Calvary. See the bitter agonies He is suffering; the blood as it runs from His wounded brow, hands, and feet—and all for us, for our sins. How 'He was wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities.' Canst thou not almost see the very nails that are driven right through His feet and through the palms of His hands, tearing and rending the flesh—and all for our sins, even for ours. 'And so,' continues Bishop Beveridge, 'when the minister takes the cup into his hand, then we are by faith to behold how fast the blood trickled down our Lord's head, when crowned with thorns; from His side, when pierced with the spear; and from His whole body when He was in His agony—and all to wash away our sins, which we know everyone of ourselves to have been guilty of.' The words of our Lord now follow, simple in themlseves; but, Oh! how powerful and almighty—'This (piece of bread) is My Body, which is given for you.' And 'This (drop of wine) is My Blood, which is shed for you and for many, for the remission of sins.' These are the words of *our Lord Himself*; who can gainsay them, or, as perhaps some affirm: 'Yes, He *said* so, but He didn't mean it.' Oh! most presumptuous individual, don't say that,

and do not try to fathom what is fathomless. At the same time I shall not attempt a reply to *such* a statement. The consecration is over, we advance with faltering steps to the altar on which the Body and Blood of our Lord lie ; the great moment of all has come, and with trembling joyousness we receive our Saviour.

> Alleluia ! Alleluia ! Alleluia !
> The strife is o'er, the battle done ;
> The triumph of the Lord is won.
> Oh, let the song of praise be sung. Alleluia !

Our pilgrimage then to Jerusalem is complete, and Almighty God has granted our prayer to the fullest. Thanks be to Thee, O Lord !

Never, as long as I live, can I forget, or shall I forget this beautiful service, and my own deep feelings on receiving the most holy Sacrament of Our Lord's Body on Low Sunday in Jerusalem. I had much desired to do so on Easter-Day ; however, this was within the octave, and I knew not how to be thankful enough.

We met Dr. and Mrs. Gobat as we left the church ; a few kind words were exchanged, and we went to our respective abodes, mine, being at the hotel, was close at hand. I found myself in time for the noonday meal, which was later than usual, so that every one might return from church. The first bell rang as a warning for us to prepare, and the second bell called us to the meal from all parts of the building, and we soon 'fell to.'

A few pages back, when I stated that bells were unknown in this country, I had forgotten the cracked-sounding tinklers that call to meals ; some of them are really very little better than what this name would imply, especially the small tin-kettle-sounding affair used in the camp, which made it most necessary for the performer on it to cruise about among the tents whilst performing. I think a very

good plan would have been to have fired a rifle off before each meal, or a revolver, which would have sounded effectually throughout the encampment. This would have been a good substitute for the thing they called a bell.

The ladies and gentlemen at the hotel had by this time become quite a sociable party. The 'talkative' gentleman, who it seems was a Colonel of Hussars, had certainly been a great acquisition at the head of our table; he had now taken his departure. His tongue had seemed seldom able to catch a few moments of repose. A man of this kind is a great acquisition in a circle where every one seems to be shy of one another. He was, without doubt, a well-travelled man, and had great experiences to relate, and, unlike many other travellers, he was able and willing to explain and narrate his adventures. Besides much travelling, he had had plenty of tent life, having lived under canvas for two years in India. My own experience in India would lead me to prefer this manner of abode to almost any other during the fine season, when it is neither too hot nor too rainy. On losing the delightful society of this gallant Colonel, a fair gentleman, who stuttered, and was rather quiet, troubling nobody with a profusion of remarks, occupied the head of the table. I felt myself far too shy and retiring to take up my position in such a billet, especially when so many ladies graced the board, and could not but admire the pluck displayed by the quiet, stuttering gentleman in so doing. It was this afternoon, after 'breakfast,' that I made the acquaintance of my American friend. To-day being Sunday, I determined to make it quite a day of rest. I needed it, for I had not yet recovered from my fatigue. The following day the encampment was to be broken up, and we were to start on the Dead Sea, Jordan, and Jericho trip. Therefore I thought I would save myself all I could for that, and so retired to my room to seek the repose I felt greatly in need of. I lay

on my bed for half-an-hour or so, but my restlessness would not permit of my obtaining much rest, so I rose and thought I would take a run down into the Valley of Gihon and see what was going on in the encampment.

The scene in this part of the world to-day was quite different to what it had been hitherto. No traffic of any sort or kind that I could perceive was going on around; all seemed restful and at peace. Even the moneychangers were not here, at least so far as their business was concerned. There were certainly many Jews loafing or lounging about the encampment, but what for I do not know; they had not brought their wares with them, and one was to-day suffered to go at will without the oft-repeated cry, 'D'yer vant ter buy?' being dinned into his ears. Those of the camp followers who had duties to perform were going about them quietly and noiselessly. There even seemed to be quiet and peace among the groups of horses who quietly nibbled and chopped the grass on the borders of the Jaffa road, within a wall that kept them from wandering too far astray. A large party of the officers and midshipmen, indeed all or nearly so, were collected in a group on the other side of the encampment, on the Bethlehem road. Many of the group were perched along the top of a wall which bounded the camp this side. I wondered what could be going on, for there seemed to be nothing to mar the peaceful rest that hovered over the whole scene around. All seemed to blend well and quietly together; even when I joined the concourse the spell was unbroken. There was no noisy conversation, or anything to disturb the general peace. The whole party was thus congregated together to enable a photograph of themselves and the encampment being taken before the break-up on the morrow. The life picture was an interesting one, which photography could not do justice to, and has not even as well as it might have done. The chief officers stood grouped in the

road, viz., the chaplain, commander, staff-surgeon, captain of marines, etc., with a few midshipmen and cadets, together with your humble servant. In the front centre, if I may use the expression, two camels knelt, remaining very still, as if fearing to spoil the picture. The walls of the Holy City on Zion Hill stretched from left to right in the background. (I am looking from the lens.) On the left, down the Gihon valley, runs the wall forming the boundary of our camp. The white tents are seen clustering within it, the British ensign and Union Jack wave above. Nearer on the left, along the wall, crowd the midshipmen and cadets, as thick as blackberries in autumn, interspersed, it may be, here and there, with a turbaned head, a long-robed Israelite, or tawny-faced Arab. The many and various costumes of people we may call natives, although they come from distant and very different climes, could not, even had we wished it, have been excluded from the group; but, on the contrary, the various colours of their dresses, mingling with our uniforms, gave a strangeness as well as a deep interest to the picture, but which, of course, it would unfortunately be quite contrary to reason to expect the magic powers of photography to be able to transfer to paper. Fronting our group, which was the foremost one, knelt the head dragoman, Hurman, and the chief guide, Paul, in their picturesque attire, with arms intertwined. Paul's dress, when mounted on horseback, was of itself quite a picture; the handsome silk head-dress, the long flowing white robe, prettily ornamented on the back with coloured silk or cotton work, top-boots and loose white trousers. The head dragoman's costume was much of the same description, but on him it was not quite so ornamental, he being a short, thick, stout man, while Paul's figure was very different, and somewhat spare.

When at last all was ready, and the long, widely-extended groups were almost as motionless as the old walls in the

background on Mount Zion, a native would make, or attempt to do so, a rush across in front of the lens, which would necessitate Paul's jumping up from his well-studied position, and giving chase, using apparently some violent abuse in an unknown tongue. However, all was now still, the brass cap was removed from the lens, and for a few seconds perfect quiet and stillness prevailed, while everybody seemed to be holding his breath. 'All right' was called out, and the concourse, as if by magic, was revivified. After waiting for ten minutes or so, to see what kind of a turn-out they had made of it, I started off to the cœnaculum and house of Caiaphas, with a little Jew boy for my guide. He could speak but a small amount of my own tongue. I wished to see the interior of the buildings there, which at present I had not done. The visit was not a satisfactory one, owing to the small amount of broken English I was enabled to extract from my Israelitish companion; the boy saw I was not pleased with him, and refused at first to receive any payment, but at the sight of silver he relented, and thanked me. My visit was repeated later in the afternoon, when I saw all that was to be seen, and which I have already described.

I had to return again to the camp, to find out about the morrow's arrangements. All continued to have the restful appearance so widely different to the preceding day's turmoil. Some were reading, some were writing, and some quietly reposing on their camp bedsteads. I looked into the chaplain's tent; he was reading his Bible in solitude.

The start was fixed for four A.M. next morning. The tents were to be sent on to Jericho, and we ourselves were to sleep at the convent of Santa Saba, which was to be the Monday night halting-place. The route thither was to be first to the Pools of Solomon, then to Bethlehem, where we were to lunch, and from thence go right on to Santa Saba. Having obtained my information, off I went to my own

domicile in the hotel, and for the remainder of the day kept at rest, harbouring all my strength for the fresh exertions of the morrow. I looked forward with quite a romantic delight to the idea of going down to the river Jordan, Dead Sea, and Jericho. Living at the hotel by myself, I was enabled to pick up little bits of information here and there. The region we were destined to travel through still retained its ancient renown, and I heard more than one story of people who had been robbed and stripped. In one case a gentleman and lady were travelling; they were stopped and robbed; the gentleman was stripped, but the lady, happily, was permitted to carry with her what she was wearing. In another case of the same kind, the lady was not so fortunate. One should always be armed, even when with a large party, for in the event of inadvertently becoming a straggler, you are very liable to be cut off, and in a few minutes stripped of everything you have on.

Before concluding this, Part No. 1, of our ramblings in Jerusalem,—and I fear more than once I have been very rambling,—I will endeavour to say a few words about the 'Greek fire,' from information I managed to pick up in conversation with those who had seen it, as well as from other sources.

It was perhaps a little unfortunate that we had been prevented from arriving a few days previously to witness the two sights enacted in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre—the one on Good Friday, and the other on Holy Saturday (Easter Eve). The one on Good Friday is performed by the fathers of the Latin convent on the evening of the Holy Day; it is the crucifixion. It is, I understand, a most solemn sight, and deeply impressive. They call the ceremony 'nox tenebrosa.' As soon as it grows dusk, the friars and pilgrims collect in the Chapel of the Apparition; a sermon is then preached by one of the monks, at the commencement of which all the candles are instantly extin-

guished, and the sermon is delivered almost in the dark. At the end, all have a lighted taper placed in their hands, and a procession is formed. Amongst the other crucifixes which are carried is a life-sized one bearing the image of our Lord. It is fastened to the cross with large nails, and besmeared with blood. So perfect seems the representation of the reality, that one can almost fancy he sees our Lord as He was hanging on the cross. This figure is carried at the head of the procession, which visits the various sanctuaries in the church, pausing at each and singing a hymn.

The first place stopped at is the Pillar of Flagellation, at the door of the Chapel of the Apparition. A hymn is sung, and another sermon is preached by a monk on the scourging of our Lord.

They next proceed to a place where they say our Lord was kept while things were being prepared for His crucifixion. Another hymn is sung, and a third friar preaches a sermon. From here they go to the Altar of the Division of Christ's Garments. A hymn is sung, but no sermon follows. They then advance to the Chapel of Division, where, after a hymn, a fourth sermon is preached. They now go up to Calvary, first uncovering their feet. There are two altars here—the one on the right is where our Lord is supposed to have been nailed to the cross; the other is where the cross stood. At the first of these they lay down the cross, and go through the act of nailing the body to the cross, which finished, after the hymn, a monk preaches a sermon on the crucifixion. After this, the life-sized bleeding representation of our Saviour on the cross is brought to the other altar, and stood upright in the hole in the rock where the true cross is believed to have stood. It is left in this position. After a hymn has been sung, the father-guardian, sitting in a chair before it, preaches a passion sermon.

This solemn sermon ended, two monks, personating Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus, approach the cross, and, with great concern depicted on their faces, with a most solemn air draw out the nails. The body is taken down from the cross, and appears the same as a real corpse; the limbs are soft and flexible as if they had been flesh; the arms remain extended until disposed upon the trunk; the body is put in a large, fair winding-sheet, and carried down from Calvary and placed on the stone of Unction; sweet powders and spices are put over it, and it is wrapt up in the winding-sheet. Whilst this is being done, a hymn is sung, and a monk afterwards preaches a funeral sermon. The body is now taken to and laid in the sepulchre, the door being shut till Easter morning, when very early it is again opened. The mass is celebrated just before the Holy Sepulchre, where the father-guardian, arrayed in his episcopal robes with a mitre on his head, has a throne erected, and administers the host.'

I have taken this somewhat hurried description from one given by Mr. Maundrell, who was present during the ceremony.

The Greek fire business is quite a hoax; and how there can be found any people so benighted as to believe in it is really strange. In my opinion, many really do not, although they go on risking their lives by being present at the ceremony, and to procure some of the so-called Holy Fire. The proceedings take place on the Saturday before Easter Day. On Easter Day we saw lots of the Holy Fire in the Greek church at Jaffa, brought from Jerusalem on camels, I suppose. A gentleman with whom I became acquainted seemed much disappointed with the whole business, at which he was present, and said he never saw any fire at all. It may be that he was unfortunately positioned, for without doubt fire does issue from two holes—apparently cut for the purpose in the sides of the holy tomb—and

when I examined them a few days afterwards, there were decidedly evidences of smoke.

The performance witnessed in this most holy church on the morning of the Greek ceremony is, I understand, beyond description. The noise and desecration is most painful, but all, or nearly so, is a pretence at religious zeal. I cannot do better, I think, than quote from an article that appeared very many years ago in a magazine,[1] for, from what I can find out, things relating to the ceremony remain now much as they were then. Truly may the Mohammedan look on with scornful smile, and ask, Is this what you call Christianity? Dr. Thompson mentions, in the 'Land and the Book,' that, when he was there, many hundreds of pilgrims were crushed to death on the day of the Holy Fire. 'The whole circle of the building seemed paved with living heads, through which the chapel of the sepulchre rose up with a sort of grotesque magnificence. Around it was left a passage of about three feet for the principal performers in these sacred orgies. Five or six parties started off in succession, and ran, or danced, or staggered, through their several performances. The great object of competition—the height of devotion—seemed to be the accomplishment of as many circuits, in as short a given time as possible, round the sepulchre. All classes were engaged, rich and poor, old and young. Boys were seen carrying the old, and the old carrying boys, upon their naked shoulders. When fatigue obliged them to cede at last their place to others, they again formed into phalanx, and proceeded, four or five abreast, in a sharp trot, to the Greek church, which is in the immediate vicinity of the holy sepulchre. Here a new scene of uproar ensued: no calculation had been made for the return of their predecessors, and parties meeting parties, like contending streams, they clashed against each other,

[1] A copy of this article is given in Bartlet's 'Walks about Jerusalem,' from which work I extracted it.

and gave a great deal of trouble and some amusement to their Turkish brethren. As the invocation went on—for all this was meant to be a kind of prayer—their piety became more intemperate and unruly: loud and hideous Kyrie Eleisons—yells reiterated and applauded in various languages by the populace—burst upon every side around us. They leaped on each other's backs, tore down each other's dresses, and, with their cheeks burning, and their eyes glaring with frenzy, called out for the fire, the fire to descend, and save them! The pavement was soon covered with caps, and shreds of shirts and mantles; but, as the votaries of Baal, they called in vain—the fire had not yet descended. They were now joined by a reinforcement of Copts, who were received with shouts, and soon followed by the drums and cymbals of the Abyssinians. Next appeared the Arabs: their naked breasts, and tanned and savage faces and uncouth screams of devotion, added grievously to the enthusiasm. The tumult had now continued from eight o'clock in the morning till half-past two, and every moment had been augmenting in violence, when at last, when it seemed to have reached its climax, the Turkish governor, taking compassion on the multitude, suddenly entered with his suite, and took his seat by the side of the Kady, at the farther end of the Latin gallery. The moment his turban appeared above the balustrade, everyone knew that heaven had relented; joy beamed on every countenance: the Kyrie Eleisons had been heard; every heart prepared for the gracious vouchsafing of the miracle. The crowd and rush were now excessive; everyone tended to the orifice on the right side of the sepulchre, and the Turkish topgis and tochoushes, who had been vigorously employed the whole morning in teaching Christian decorum, could scarcely open a passage with their long whips for the person who had purchased the right (he was an Armenian, as might be expected) of having the first spark of the holy fire. The

Kady at last, at the suggestion of the governor, gave the signal with his rod, and the last imploring litany commenced. The papas proceeded with lights and banners, and in their large, loose silk, embroidered dalmatics, which brought one back to the Chrysostoms of Constantinople, made several circuits with their bishops round the sepulchre.

'The preliminary ritual was now gone through, and the Archbishop having taken off his cape and mitre, and now and then glancing up at the Kady, broke the seals, and without any attendance entered the chapel of the sepulchre. This was a moment of suspense, at least for pilgrims; but those who know what a good understanding there is between them have already seen the miracle in the countenance of the Governor. In a minute or less, the person who stood at the orifice already mentioned drew forth a large torch or staff, with a grated receptacle at the end blazing with the clearest fire. The fire was communicated in a similar manner, but a few seconds later, from the entry of the Copts. It is quite impossible to describe, with adequate effect, the scene which immediately followed; there were eight thousand pilgrims in the church; one universal shout rose simultaneously from the whole congregation. The Latins were the sheep, the Orientals the lambs; the opinion of Heaven had been signified, from a miracle there was no appeal. This mode of cutting the controversy may be subject to cavil, but it is much shorter and perhaps as certain as most others still in use. Whatever may be the case, the main point was gained—the rioters themselves were satisfied. Hands crossed in every direction—torches blazed in every hand—cries spread from mouth to mouth, and happy the man whose light was only the four-and-twentieth in descent from the original phosphorus. The Archbishop now left the sepulchre in the same undress in which he had entered, but had no sooner crossed the threshold than he

was taken up in triumph by four stout papas, and carried horizontally like this on their shoulders, brandishing his torches as he went along, to the great satisfaction and comfort of his people, until he had reached his own sanctuary. This part of the ceremony I particularly admired; it gave me new ideas of the triumph of religion, and I could not help looking round to the Governor to see if he also were of my opinion. He kept, however, his Mohammedan face with great propriety, and reserved, probably, his congratulations at their mutual success for a private interview with the good Archbishop. By this time the holy fire had been gradually dispersed over the whole building, and had even got as far as the Armenian ladies who sat opposite. They drew back their white veils for an instant, kissed the tapers, and put up a prayer for their own orthodoxy. The noise still continued, prayers were heard with shrieks, blessings with curses; women crossed themselves, and waved their torches over their naked bosoms; men were seen burning portions of their winding-sheet, so that they might sleep comfortably and die peaceably without any apprehension from the onset of the vampire. The Turks began at last to think that the infidels had got quite enough of the miracle for one year, and, listening to no expostulations, again resumed their whips, and beat out the lingering enthusiasts before them. A new scene of disorder ensued; and screams and cries, supplications and resistance, were echoed from every side, and it was long before the Holy Sepulchre ceased to be one of the liveliest images of a place of strife and penalty which eye or ear could present to the imagination.'

Such, then, is the yearly disgraceful scene enacted within the holiest building upon earth, and on the holiest ground.

END OF PART I.

PART II.

JOURNEYINGS OF THE CAVALCADE TO JORDAN, JERICHO, AND DEAD SEA.

CHAPTER I.

THE START FOR JORDAN, JERICHO, AND DEAD SEA.

After finishing the sociable meal of dinner at the Table d'Hôte, we retired to the drawing-room, and formed quite a pleasant little party. The ladies commenced to withdraw early to their rooms; and I was not sorry when I could do so without being thought ungallant, remembering the hour in the morning I ought to be on the move. My journal letter, as usual, was not forgotten; and my head was on the pillow somewhere about 10.30 P.M. Being always an early riser, it was not necessary to make arrangements to be called; I was sure to wake in time. All the little packing I had to do of course I finished before going to bed, at least as far as I could, so as to leave as little to be done in the morning as possible. I was up with the lark, for it was hardly broad daylight by five o'clock; the luggage—if such a term may be used for my small packages—was buckled and fastened up, and I had not forgotten my riding-straps, which, not being a very expert horseman, were very necessary for keeping my trousers from slipping up to my knees. By clapping my hands even at this early hour, the usual 'Yes, sare' was soon heard, and I ordered breakfast. The morning was clear and fine, the dear Mount of Olives stood out in bold relief against the pure light-blue sky, and from appearances one would imagine a broiling day might be expected. Breakfast was not long in being despatched, although I felt I had plenty of time, knowing that the probabilities were that the party would not be under way for

about an hour after the time fixed. So my luggage and self did not hurry, but proceeded somewhat leisurely to the encampment.

The scenes that presented themselves on arrival there showed me I was right; but the hour for starting must have been altered, for there were numbers of midshipmen half naked, some performing their ablutions in the open air, and some still in their night-shirts; there were fortunately no ladies about, otherwise the variety of costume—and, in some cases, its extreme scantiness—might not have suited the occasion. The scene was a busy one; the vendors of a large variety of articles were again roaming about among the tents; half-dressed midshipmen were hurrying for water, &c., to wash, whilst others were using their towels in such a way as if they meant to remove the outer skin altogether; some few were dressed, and had commenced a little bargaining and a little more chaffing of the obliging gentlemen Jews who so kindly and considerately offered change. Baggage lay about, and packing was going on. There was certainly an unwonted stir, and it was very evident a grand move was intended. Horses were being saddled and prepared for the road. In the midst of the hurry-scurry, the breakfast bell began to tinkle, and the cry 'breakfast, breakfast' sounded through the camp; for a few minutes all, or nearly so, was quiet, while the general attack upon the good things was being made. It was quite astonishing what a magic effect that one word of 'breakfast' seemed to have, and how soon, when heard, unfinished and indeed hardly commenced toilets were completed. As I had already made a hearty meal, I did not join in this one, but employed myself in reading a few notes on the journey before us, and some passages in the Bible relating thereto. The Arab guard and their sheik had joined our party, and their general appearance in their savage-looking garb gave one the idea

they would use with effect the heavy, curved swords they wore or the guns they carried, if at all necessary. It seems, on first thoughts, very absurd that such a formidable party as our own should require a guard at all, and many of us armed with revolvers; but still a guard is very necessary through the robber country we had to pass, more especially for bringing up the rear, for there were always many stragglers whom it would have been easy to cut off; and besides this, the guard is a kind of black mail imposed, they themselves being robbers, so that if they were not employed they would very likely be met with under less favourable circumstances in some wild pass, and then woe be to the stragglers. It would not only be from them that we should have cause to fear, but their tribes encamped away in the desert we should perhaps have to pass, and they all being informed of the approach of a large party, would very likely make a far better thing of it than they would by the money received, if a portion of their tribe were acting as a guard. The sheik was the very picture of a wild Arab of the desert. His dress and equipments were superior to his companions: he wore a heavy, curved-bladed sword or scimitar in a gorgeous scabbard, and a revolver in his belt; he was tall and well put together, spare but very muscular; his features were regular, his nose somewhat of the Wellington class, eyes coal black, and sunken cheeks, a heavy moustache almost, if not entirely, hiding his mouth, and the kefiyeh flying over his shoulders concealed the formation of his head. As we afterwards beheld this man in the desert mounted on his steed, dashing about with his followers at full gallop, lance in rest, and body bent forward on his horse's neck, the sight was more like what one might read of in books, than see. However, that we must come to by-and-bye.

While I had been cogitating and making mental notes, breakfast proceeded and ended. A midshipman's breakfast

is a hasty one, and does not take many minutes in the discussing. The sound was now 'to horse, mount, mount;' it was quite a business to find our several steeds; this took time, and when found were considerably restive. They were all very fresh, and quite ready and impatient to begin the journey; they would require all their strength—for the next four days it was destined to be pretty severely tried. Some of the animals looked half-starved, but for endurance they were perfectly wonderful; appearance did not always carry the day, for it might be the worst looking were the best 'to go.' My own horse was well enough to look at, plump and strong, but his 'going' abilities could not be compared to some of his leaner kind.

Another photographic operation was being prepared. We were to be taken this time mounted and ready for the start; but it turned out to be, in my humble opinion, a miserable failure; certainly the undertaking was no easy one, the horses neighing and restless, in many cases would not stand still, mine especially; I had once or twice to dismount and hold him, but fortunately he remained quiet while the picture was being done. The baggage mules had started, and we were all in the saddle, when the Bishop of Gibraltar (the Hon. Dr. Harris), mounted on a nice little brown horse, rode down the Jaffa road, and joined our party. On Sunday morning (if I mistake not) he had dined with our officers in the camp, and as he was bound on the same tour as ourselves, he was invited to join our party, and which he was graciously pleased to do.

We were now ready, and waited a few minutes until his lordship should be amongst the group, before the photograph was taken. There was no 'placing' done, each stood where he pleased, or where his horse determined to go. 'Still!' was the order, and a hush followed; the morning sun was clear and bright, and the performance

was soon over. The photograph finished, the well-mounted Arab guard advanced at a walk, followed by the head dragoman on his pretty, quiet, ambling grey, almost lamb-like, unless required to be otherwise; on came the cavalcade, holding in their impatient horses, streaming out from the encampment in their varied costumes, some with flowing robes, fez caps with white pugeries, the red and white showing out with brilliancy, together with the rest of the garb which floated gently in the still morning air as their horses moved onward, or, as anon they galloped or trotted, became inflated like a gauze balloon, making the figure of the rider look strange but very picturesque. The head-dresses were of all kinds; some wore pith helmets, some naval uniform caps with white covers or pugeries, some simply a turban of white gauze wound round the head. But it would be really endless to attempt to describe the varied and motley attires assumed for the occasion; however, I must say, some displayed considerable taste, and the *tout ensemble* of the whole troop, with guides, dragomans, guard, muleteers, and camp followers, was a very pretty as well as a most imposing sight, and such an one as we can never expect to see again. The stream of riders wound along the road to the Jaffa Gate; then, turning to the right, followed along for a short distance by the walls skirting Mount Zion, and winding down a pathway into the Valley of Hinnom. Here we halted for a few minutes to enable the rear to come up; there was something apparently wrong, as was not uncommon at the commencement of our journeys, a mule found to be lame, a saddle insecurely fastened, or something of that kind. Gradually the party came up, and thickened into a crowd round some ancient olives in the bed of the rocky valley. Thickly collecting together, which occasionally happened, did not suit me at all, as my horse was in the habit of objecting, and very demonstratively showing his displeasure by

kicking out at the horses near. 'All right, forward in front, march!' The whole cavalcade, now well together, moved on across the valley and up the opposite slope, with backs turned towards the Holy City, and faces towards Bethlehem.

CHAPTER II.

TO SOLOMON'S POOLS AND BETHLEHEM.

The journeys we had before us were indeed no light undertaking with so large a concourse, and with so many 'quite youngsters,' indeed, to judge from appearances, almost children. The question that would repeatedly present itself to my mind, as my eye travelled up and down the long stream of horses and mules, was—will all these return in safety? It is well known in general what kind of stuff the gay British midshipman is made of, and the risks he thinks nothing of running, simply and only for a spree. It may be, they do not appear to be risks to him at all who is used to a life at sea on board ship, where he is constantly aloft, and accustomed now and then to be hanging on by 'his eyelids' as the saying is. We were also going down into the region of precipices and fever. One out of the first party, and they were only few in number, returned unwell, and had a bad attack of fever. He is now, while I write (about six weeks afterwards), convalescent, but greatly pulled down. One also of a party of our seamen was taken ill, and has not yet recovered, although they did not go to Jordan, Dead Sea, or Jericho. However, here we were all well, happy, and in excellent spirits, riding merrily across the Plains of Rephaim. 'The word' was presently passed along from the front that the tree of Judas was at hand. Yes, there on our left hand was the traditional tree and Field of Blood—Aceldama; it was used

as a place of burial for strangers, as their bodies could be thrown into the ground, which from the nature of the soil soon decomposed them, and they shortly returned to their native dust; this is what I understand was the reason for so using this plot of ground.

The name of this plain—Rephaim—was derived from a gigantic race called Rephaim. The enormous King Og was one of them, perhaps also Goliath. This plain was often the battle-field between the Jews and Philistines. The spot where the Philistines encamped against David when he gave them such a routing, and smote them 'from Geba until thou come to Gaza,' is shown here. The spot in particular that is pointed out must be, where David 'fetched a compass, and came upon them over against the mulberry trees' (2 Sam. v. 22–25). This plain is also called the Plain of the Giants. We had three small mishaps in crossing it; the first was a horse running away with one of the midshipmen, he came galloping up from the rear, dashed past the bishop, and his lordship had a narrow escape of being unhorsed, for the midshipman as he passed, in attempting to save himself, tried to catch hold of his lordship's waist; this he fortunately failed in doing, and presently down went both horse und rider. I soon leapt from my animal and ran to the rescue; one leg was underneath the horse, and proved to be entangled in the stirrup. There was some risk, while getting him clear, of breaking his leg, but I managed to lift the horse sufficiently to enable him to free his foot. Providentially he was uninjured beyond the fright and a little shaking, and in the course of five or ten minutes, by the administering of a little brandy he was able to mount and proceed. I also had a mishap on this plain. I had my Bible and some notes in my hand, which I was intently reading, respecting the neighbourhood—when all at once I found myself almost on my horse's neck. The saddle-girths had slackened, and

the saddle slipped forward; in my hurry to vault off before being thrown, I hurt my middle finger; the wound, although slight, caused me pain and some trouble for days. But I shall not mind if I always carry the scar; it will help to remind me of the ride to Bethlehem. The third accident occurred to Lieutenant O——; his horse was walking, when quite suddenly he tripped and fell, throwing his rider fair over his head; he was unhurt.

Before proceeding with my little story I wish to inform my readers that I have been favoured, by the kindness of Assistant-Surgeon Robertson, R.N., and Captain Lean, R.M.L.I., with some valuable jottings, taken by them on horseback and other places, and it is through their kindness that I am able to give the hours of reaching and leaving various places on this our Jericho journey.

The building that we are now riding past on our left is the Convent of Mar Elias, and is said to mark the spot where Elijah rested under the juniper tree, and was comforted by an Angel (1 Kings xix. 1–5), on fleeing from Jezebel. This is just half way between Jerusalem and Bethlehem. We rode by a very ancient well in the roadway, and I am very sorry, but its history has quite left my memory. The plains of Rephaim are past, and those of Bethlehem are entered. A town called Zelzar is close here.

We had started from Jerusalem about 8.30 A.M.; at 10.10 the City of David was in sight. What floods of recollections crowd the mind as we uncover our head in reverence to the place where He, the Saviour of the world, was born. But we must at present discuss subjects of interest nearer at hand, for here a short distance off down the slope is Rachel's Tomb. Let us pause here awhile. The Tomb of Rachel is marked by a small Turkish mosque, having of itself no claims to antiquity, but is deeply interesting in sacred association. By the universal opinion of all

authorities this is recognised as the true site of her grave. Yes, here was the spot where Jacob halted to mourn over Rachel; can you not even now imagine you see the very train of the venerable patriarch—his flocks and herds, asses and camels, surrounding the grave and spread out over the plain;—what deep sorrow rends the heart of this old man; and can we regard the spot with otherwise than tender emotion and respect? The place where this spot is first mentioned is in the 35th chapter of Genesis, where Rachel, as her soul was departing, for she died, named her new-born babe Ben-oni, son of sorrow. It was soon after God had changed Jacob's name to Israel, that he journeyed with Rachel from Bethel to Bethlehem. It was during this journey and just when it was about to end—for there you see is Bethlehem only about two miles further on—that poor Rachel was confined, and died in giving birth to Ben-oni (Benjamin). 'And Rachel died, and was buried in the way to Ephrath, which is Bethlehem. And Jacob sat up a pillar upon her grave: that is the pillar of Rachel's grave unto this day.' We find again reference made to this sad event in the 48th chapter—'As for me, when I came from Padan, Rachel died by me in the land of Canaan in the way, when yet there was but a little way to come unto Ephrath; and I buried her there in the way of Ephrath; the same is Bethlehem.' How more than interesting it is to be on the very spot with open Bible in hand, and read all the passages connected therewith; but here we were unable to do so, as the dragoman led on, and only a portion of our party halted for a few moments. We have, however, the story before us, and we know it to be fact. Could this record have been made to symbolise a greater amount of anguish that was to occur close here 2,000 years hence, a sorrow in connection with the Man of Sorrows. Some three or four hundred yards from Rachel's Tomb is pointed out a heap of rubbish, which is said to be the remains of Ramah—'In

Rama was there a voice heard, lamentation, and weeping, and great mourning; Rachel weeping for her children, and would not be comforted, because they are not.' Whether this is really about the locality of the one that existed in the time of Herod I know not. I should almost imagine that Ramah was the whole vicinity of Bethlehem, and that Herod caused the infants to be slain all round about. Perhaps some may think this idea absurd, but if Ramah was only a village or hamlet, why should it of all places be mentioned, and all the important towns round about not alluded to? There are two Ramahs still in existence; one is a few miles north of Jerusalem, and both too far off to be able to lay claim to being the one alluded to.

Passing Rachel's Tomb, we leave the road to Bethlehem on the left, purposing to take another route to it, in order first to visit Solomon's Pools. The way, for I cannot call it a road, became rough indeed, and our horses had to pick their path amongst the stones and rocks, like cats among eggs. This sort of work was slow and tedious. One midshipman came to grief by his saddle slipping round and throwing him. I was rather afraid, if left behind, he might fall among thieves, so reined in my horse, being myself armed; but there was no fear, we had a guard in front as well as interspersed here and there among us, in case of need, so I rode on.

About one hour's very rough riding brought us in sight of a large square building, an old Saracen castle, which turned out to be (at the present time) a Turkish guard-house, and hard by were the three large Pools of Solomon. We arrived at 11.25 A.M. and dismounted. Of course the first thing to be thought of was a bathe, and in a very short time the upper pool was alive with midshipmen. Horses and mules were allowed to stray at will for the pleasure of the moment. A good cool plunge in the refreshing, clear water carried all before it, and the horses must take care of

themselves; none of them, however, strayed away very far, but turned to munching the grass, which was pretty plentiful round about. I did not join the bathers, and while they were plunging and splashing about in the water took the opportunity of riding a short distance to the source of these pools. A species of stone or rock cavern, with steps inside, led down to the spring from which we were told the water came. The excavations of these pools lie one above the other and are of great extent, the largest is the uppermost, and is 582 feet long. There was abundance of water in it, but I am not aware of the depth; however, should the depth permit (which it doubtless would if the pool were full), it would with ease float our ship—a two-decked line-of-battle ship of 2,900 tons burthen. The several dimensions of these pools, as given by Dr. Thompson, are—the one furthest east nearly 600 ft. long, 200 ft. wide, and 50 ft. deep; the centre one 423 ft. long, and the lower 380 ft. Dr. Robinson gives the first as 582 ft. by 207 ft., and 50 ft. deep; the second 423 ft. by 250 ft., and 39 ft. deep; the third 380 ft. by 236 ft., and 25 ft. deep. They are certainly of gigantic proportions and most impressive in the utter solitude which all around reigns supreme. The greatest praise we can give to them is that they are worthy of Solomon. When we saw these pools they could not have been more than half full, if so much; but at times they even overflow their sides. Respecting the fountain-head of these enormous cisterns, think you it possible that tradition is correct when it makes it to be 'the spring shut up, the fountain sealed,' to which the 'sister spouse' is compared in Song iv. 12? The well is still covered by a stone, which had to be removed, and one had to crawl along on his hands and knees, and descend several feet before reaching the water which springs up from the rock, from whence the stream is carried along a canal to an aqueduct east of the pools, and carried round

the shoulder of the hill apparently to irrigate the gardens. These pools are partly excavated and partly formed of masonry, and there can be no doubt that they were intended to supply Jerusalem with water, and it may be more particularly the Temple, for there is a subterranean passage that conveys or did convey the water to the city, a distance of nine miles. But there must necessarily be some doubt as to who was the originator of them. The only passage that I am aware of that seems to have much strength as to the decision is Eccles. ii. 4–6, 'I made me great works; I builded me houses; I planted me vineyards; I made me gardens and orchards, and I planted trees in them of all kinds of trees. I made me pools of water, to water therewith the wood that bringeth forth trees.' But not a word about the aqueduct of nine miles, mostly underground, to Jerusalem, which winds past Bethlehem and enters the city on the side of Mount Zion, passing into the area of the temple.

It is time to make a move. 'All out' is the order, and crowds of naked bodies scramble from the pools and hastily resume their clothing. The 'catching' business follows, and for a time one or two cannot find their steeds. However, all are at last mounted, and we start down a valley, passing in succession these grand old pools of water, one below the other, and so arranged that the bottom of the upper is on a level, or perhaps a little above the surface of the lower pool.

Leaving these pools behind, the scenery became very grand as we approached Solomon's gardens. Bold, rocky hills rose on either side of a deep valley; the valley, however, itself is spread with a species of rough carpet of fertility. It is in this valley, we are told, that the gardens of Solomon were, and the very appearance seemed to assure us that there had once been extensive gardens in that valley. What a beautiful sheltered nook it must have been, and so well chosen for anything of the kind. These gardens we

are told are situated in Etham. The rocky pathway here became so narrow that the word had to be past along to 'form single file'; this frequently had to be done during our future rides, and generally created more or less disturbance amongst the horses, many of which liked to push on before others, and were very restless as long as 'the block' remained, thus causing some danger to the riders of perhaps being thrown headlong down a declivity, such as we had here painfully close on our right, so that had an accident occurred, the gardens of Solomon would have been entered in a most unpleasant manner. With time and patience 'the block' diminished, and a long single file was formed, stretching far ahead and far astern, as sailors would say, twisting and twirling in all kinds of shapes, like an endless snake winding its way along the declivity of the hills. The centre of the body for a time would be lost sight of, while the headmost part would be seen far in front wending its way over a pass; now the whole length would be visible, covering, perhaps, with stragglers, muleteers, guides, &c., but little short of a mile.

On the right, for most of the way, was a long stone or rock embankment. Along this ran the aqueduct from the pools, mostly covered in, but at intervals, the covering being broken away, a stream of the clearest water was seen running on its way to Bethlehem. At 12.40 p.m. we reached a spot in the valley of Etham, that was pointed out as the place where Samson concealed himself from the Philistines, and somewhere about this neighbourhood we had an excellent view of the Frank mountain, some six miles distant; it was so called by the Crusaders, 'and must have been a strong fortification during all ages, in which isolated hills afforded the natural platform for castles. There is none of equal height and size in Palestine.'[1] About five miles or so to the south-west of this mountain is the valley of Berachah

[1] Thompson.

(valley of blessing), made for ever famous by the signal victory which God granted to Jehoshaphat over the allied forces of the Moabites, Edomites, and Ammonites, from whom such an enormous amount of spoil was captured—'they found among them in abundance both riches with the dead bodies, and precious jewels, which they stripped off for themselves, more than they could carry away; and they were three days in gathering of the spoil, it was so much. And on the fourth day they assembled themselves in the valley of Berachah; for there they blessed the Lord: therefore the name of the same place was called, the valley of Berachah, unto this day.' (2 Chron. xx. 25, 26.)

We will conclude this chapter with the Terebinthine Vale or Valley of Elah. What is the exact position of this renowned valley I do not feel quite positive, but it cannot be very far from where we are now riding. Some place it three miles from Bethlehem, others a greater distance. It is made for ever notable as the scene of the victory gained by the youthful and ruddy shepherd David, over the uncircumcised champion of the Philistines, who had 'defied the armies of the living God.' The very brook, where David 'chose him five smooth stones,' is still said to flow through the vale. What a history is that of David! Let us briefly glance at its commencement: 'And Saul and the men of Israel were gathered together, and pitched by the valley of Elah, and set the battle in array against the Philistines.' There stood the armies on a mountain on either side of the valley. A man of gigantic height and proportions advanced from the Philistine army; he was about ten feet in height; he wears on his head a helmet of brass—his visage is terrible. He is armed with a coat of mail weighing 5,000 shekels of brass—greaves of brass are upon his legs, and a target of brass between his shoulders—the staff of his spear is like a weaver's beam, and the spear's head weighs 600 shekels of iron. There stood this mighty champion looking like a

brazen statue. For forty days did this terrible giant come into the valley to defy the armies of Israel and say, 'Choose you a man for you, and let him come down to me. If he be able to fight with me, and to kill me, then will we be your servants: but if I prevail against him, and kill him, then shall ye be our servants, and serve us.' Such were the words that David, the young shepherd, heard, when Jesse, his father, sent him down from feeding his flocks to his brethren in the camp of Israel, with parched corn and some loaves of bread. Surely there was good reason for the men of Israel to tremble with fear when they beheld this living monster advance. The young man David, hearing the tumult and defiance, enquired into the cause and asks: 'Who is this uncircumcised Philistine, that he should defy the armies of the living God?' Undeterred from his heroic intentions by his sneering, angry brother, and being brought before Saul, he offers to go forth and meet the giant, who said unto him, 'Thou art not able to go against the Philistine to fight with him; thou art but a youth.' David then relates the two deeds which by God's help he had done —deeds as daring and desperate as this could be. He had killed both a lion and a bear with his empty hands; 'And the Lord that delivered me out of the paw of the lion and out of the paw of the bear will deliver me out of the hand of this Philistine.' David refuses all armour, sword, and helmet, and putting them away from him, takes his staff, and goes to the brook and chooses from it five smooth stones; he puts them in a shepherd's bag, and a sling is in his hand. He thus goes forth to meet this awful champion who is arrayed in all the panoply of war. The giant looks disdainfully on David, 'for he is but a youth and ruddy, and of a fair countenance.' He growls forth, 'Come to me, and I will give thy flesh unto the fowls of the air and to the beasts of the field.' David replies, 'I come to thee in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel,

whom thou hast defied.' David was well skilled with the sling and the stone. He takes one from his bag and slung it, while the two advance towards each other. The stone strikes the giant in the forehead, and sinks into his temple; he is convulsed, staggers, and falls with a clanging crash. In a moment David is upon him, and with his own sword severs his mighty head from his enormous trunk, and bears it in humble triumph to Saul, thus verifying his confidence and piety, for he fought 'that all the earth might know that there is a God in Israel.' Such, then, is the interesting story which may be considered as the commencement of the most eventful history of David's wonderful life.

In the meanwhile, as we cogitate, our horses continue on down the narrow, broken pathway. It is now widening, and presently, as it turns to the left, we hear the welcome cry from those in advance, 'Bethlehem's in sight.'

CHAPTER III.

BETHLEHEM.

Yes, there indeed was the City of David across the valley, on a hill. Our horses broke into a trot, and some into a gallop, but it was seldom we met with ground suitable for this. The path or roadway was very winding, now turning this way, now that, descending gradually into a valley, then ascending quite a steep declivity, up which our horses managed to climb. The name Bethlehem means 'House of Bread,' and was probably given to it on account of the fertility of the surrounding country. In Micah v. 2, it is called 'Ephrath;' in Luke ii. 4, 'City of David;' and in Matt. ii. 1-5, 'Bethlehem of Judea,' in order to distinguish it from another town of the same name situated near Nazareth in Galilee.

Up the hill, then, our horses scrambled. On this hill are interspersed fine vineyards, backed in with stones; there is also an abundance of fig, pomegranate, and olive trees here, and in the valley wave green crops of corn. The climbing takes some time, but at last we reach the level, and are actually traversing the city where our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ was born. How *could* we realise the fact: only a short time ago we had been where He died. Again we uncover our head, while we breathe a short prayer of thanksgiving to Him who deigned to come into our world, and enter it in a bodily form in this for ever and ever Holy City. How ancient and timeworn the buildings looked on either hand as the cavalcade clattered past over the uneven and broken thoroughfare. Of course we caused much excitement amongst the villagers—for Bethlehem is only a village now—bacsheesh was, as usual, the oft-recurring cry. Many of the women and children had their foreheads ornamented with heavy frontlets of silver coins strung in rows, and yet these also begged for bacsheesh, while one would almost fancy their heads ached again with the heavy load of money they carried on them. The women of Bethlehem, I had understood, were noted for their beauty. I may probably be without much taste, but still I cannot say that I considered in general that beauty prevailed amongst them; some had tolerably regular features and dark eyes, but that is about all.

We rode direct for the Church of the Nativity, which is inclosed within the walls of a monastery, a venerable and magnificent edifice erected by St. Helena. Greek, Latin, and Armenian monks live in different quarters within this very extensive convent. But if you will kindly permit, I propose putting off descriptions until after lunch, which is prepared and waiting for us in the Latin quarter of the monastery. Turning the angle of some houses, we faced the Church of the Nativity across an open space. Our

head dragoman here cried out to us to keep close together, 'for there are thieves here,' and we were formed into a compact mass, line abreast as close as we could get our horses, while the guard ranged in front. I thought from the excitement that an attack was meditated, so prepared my pistol and sprung the dagger out of my stick. But any uneasiness on this head proved to be unfounded, for the species of thieves around were only those who looked out for an opportunity to seize things unawares. My dagger-stick I found of great service. We were crowded on all sides by people pestering us to buy of their various wares, such as carved shells, mother-of-pearl crosses, crucifixes, rosaries, beads, &c., but by keeping the dagger out I easily cleared a passage for myself wherever I went. It carried great respect with it and proved a great comfort to me here as well as in other places.

We arrived in Bethlehem about 1.35 P.M.; all of us, I may truthfully say, *rather more* than tolerably hungry, and heartily glad when ushered into the refectory. This was a long room, with tables of sufficient length to reach nearly from end to end, which were laden with a sumptuous repast. The senior officers took up their position at the head of the left hand table, the commander being at the top, the bishop on his left, then our chaplain, then myself, and then —but it would be endless to attempt to describe the position of each one. The midshipmen crowded in, stowed themselves up and down the long tables, soon occupying every inch of room, and set *to* with a will, as the musical clattering of knives, forks, and glasses loudly proclaimed. The dear good monks waited upon us, and with great attention and assiduity supplied our every want. There was an abundance of everything—hot meat, cold meat, hard-boiled eggs—and, indeed, our large appetites soon found themselves mastered, and the general attack waxed weaker and weaker, till all were quite vanquished. The pictures

that adorned the walls were plain and of religious subjects, excepting one over the entrance door, which represented some prince, emperor, or king. Our sumptuous meal being over, the longed-for time came to visit the spots so intensely dear to all Christians. It seemed often so difficult to realise one's being present at such holy places: was it a dream, or was it a reality? was I indeed entering under the same roof and building that enclosed the lowly manger where my Saviour was born of a meek and humble virgin, where the King of kings and Lord of lords lay a helpless infant in a manger for His bed? Here, then, commenced the life of Him who was a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. Here it was that He first took upon Him all our cares, all our woes and pains, and wore our weak flesh. Here it was that He was born Who was tempted as we are, but without sin. Oh, gentle Jesus! how can I help when I think of Thee and all Thou wentest through for me, how can I help my eyes swimming with tears at my very unworthiness and Thy great love! And, gentle Jesus! how could I help when by and by I visited the very spot of thy birth, falling down and my lips clinging to it—that most adorable and holy of places!

Bethlehem was called the City of David, because it was here that David was born, and here he spent many of his early years in the humble occupation of shepherd, until his encounter with Goliath opened to him a new career. Here were also born Abijah, Elimelech, Obed, Jesse, Boaz, and the Apostle Matthias, and this is supposed to have been the scene of the story of Ruth. But the event of all great events, which gives this little city the pre-eminence of all the cities of the world, Jerusalem excepted, is that here the Son of God was born in humbleness and poverty. 'And thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall He come forth unto Me, that is to be the ruler in Israel; whose goings

forth have been of old, from everlasting.' Over this spot stands the grand old church of the Nativity, the oldest Christian church in existence. The Latin church, St. Catherine, is built in the form of a cross. The nave is adorned with forty-eight Corinthian columns in four rows. The Greek church is very well worth a visit; the costly exhibition of art, presented by high dignities, is truly beautiful. But I fear I am putting the cart before the horse, for we visited the Greek and Armenian churches last.

When we had finished our repast, a monk conducted us down into a narrow passage cut in the solid rock, first giving each a lighted taper. The altar and tomb of Eusebius was pointed out and stopped at in this passage. We then came to that of St. Jerome. This holy saint passed the greater part of his life in this monastery. From his tomb we came to a grotto, twenty feet high and nine square; this was his oratory, and said to have been where he passed so many years in translating the Bible (the Vulgate). After we left this, a column was pointed out where we were told that 20,000 children were buried who had been killed by Herod's order. The altar here is called that of the Innocents. Next to this little chapel is the Chapel of St. Joseph, covering the place where he is said to have retired at the moment of the Nativity. The passage winds along underground to the place of the Nativity. We have great and good authority for believing that this is the true spot. St. Jerome himself is our chiefest authority.

We approached the sacred crypt and entered the 'Grotto of the Nativity' with lowly reverence. We slowly moved to that part of this ancient stable where The Event took place. This cavern-stable is 37 ft. 6 in. long, 11 ft. 3 in. broad, and 9 ft. high; so try and imagine (those who perhaps may never see) what this holiest of places is like. 'It is lined and floored with marble;' on either side are five oratories, 'answering precisely to the ten cribs or stalls

for horses that the stable in which our Saviour was born contained.' It is the custom in Syria to use caves for stables, and this place seems to have been well suited for the purpose. From reading I had formed erroneous ideas respecting the holy spot, and imagined it to have been deeper and further from the surface level than it in reality is. Personal observations altered my ideas, and I became convinced that it must be *The Place*. On our right is a niche where The Birth took place; the exact spot is marked by a glory in the floor, 'composed of marble and jasper, encircled with silver, around which are inscribed the words, "Hic de Virgine Maria Jesus Christus natus est."'—(Here was Jesus Christ born of the Virgin Mary). Some of us knelt and kissed the spot. I bowed in lowly reverence, and pressed my lips long and fervently upon this sacred spot, at the same time breathing a short and earnest prayer; one other of the officers followed my example. Over the silver star is an altar, resting against the side of the rock, which is here cut into an arcade. The manger is about seven paces from this recess; it is a little lower, and you descend by two steps; the small chapel it forms is hewn out of the rock. The manger itself consists of a block of marble, raised about a foot and a half above the floor, and hollowed out in the form of a manger; this is itself a modern piece of work, as a matter of course, and I suppose only placed here to mark where the real manger was positioned. An altar is placed over it, and opposite to it is the altar of the Magi. 'Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judæa in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men from the East to Jerusalem, saying, Where is He that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen His star in the east, and are come to worship Him; and, lo, the star (in appearance like a star, probably a meteor) which they saw in the east, went before them, till it came and stood over where the young child was. When they

saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy. And when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary His mother, and fell down, and worshipped Him: and when they had opened their treasures they presented unto Him gifts; gold, and frankincense, and myrrh.' On this ground, then, in this very cave, is where these events happened more than 1,800 years ago. How vividly we can imagine the picture of these men kneeling here in worshipful reverence before the infant King reposing in His mother's lap just *there*, a few yards off. At their backs is the entrance of the stable through which we can even now fancy we see their camels and numerous attendants; they have come many a weary mile across a desert and rock-bound country, it may be from far distant Persia; but at last they are here, at last they are prostrate at the feet of their well-beloved Lord. We ourselves cannot see His bodily form, but we, too, have come from afar, and now worship Him on the very spot where once He was in the bodily form of a sweet infant. Yes, dear Lord, we worship Thee, we adore Thee; have mercy upon us, Thy unworthy servants. The chapel is illuminated by thirty-two splendid lamps, presented by different princes of Christendom. Chateaubriand thus describes the scene: 'Nothing can be more pleasing, or better calculated to excite devotional sentiments, than this subterranean church. It is adorned with pictures of the Italian and Spanish schools, which represent the mysteries of the place. The usual ornaments of the manger are of blue satin, embroidered with silver. Incense is continually burning before the cradle of our Saviour. I have heard an organ, touched by no ordinary hand, play, during mass, the sweetest and most tender tones of the best Italian composers. These concerts charm the Christian Arab, who, leaving his camels to feed, repairs, like shepherds of old, to Bethlehem, to adore the King of kings in the manger. I have seen this

inhabitant of the desert communicate at the altar of the magi, with a fervour, a piety, a devotion, unknown among the Christians of the West. The continual arrival of caravans from all parts of Christendom, the public prayers, the prostrations, nay, even the richness of the presents sent here by the Christian princes, altogether produce feelings in the soul which it is much easier to conceive than describe.' I hope and think I shall never forget my visit to any of these most holy spots, and the fine old edifice that shelters them, the battlements and walls of which Dr. E. D. Clarke describes as seeming 'like those of a vast fortress.' The Church of the Nativity was built by St. Helena, mother of the first Christian emperor, and some centuries after was repaired by Edward IV. of England. It is the oldest existing Christian church in the world.

Our approach to Bethlehem was made in almost an opposite direction to *the* entrance by the gate, which is a deep and heavy gateway. The celebrated well alluded to in 2 Sam. xxiii. 15, is near this gate. It was harvest time; the Philistines were in Bethlehem, and David who was outside suffered a great thirst. The story is well worth repeating, for it could hardly be surpassed. David being a native of Bethlehem knew of this well and of its delicious waters, of which he had so often tasted, and longed to assuage his thirst by drinking at the delicious stream of that limpid spring. 'And David longed, and said, Oh that one would give me to drink of the water of the well of Bethlehem, which is by the gate.' This exclamation was heard by the 'three mighty men whom David had,' namely, Adino, Eleazar, and Shammah; these men fought their way through the Philistines, 'and drew water out of the well of Bethlehem, that was by the gate, and took it, and brought it to David: nevertheless he would not drink thereof, but poured it out unto the Lord.'

This well still retains its ancient renown. It is in the

neighbouring valley through which we presently passed, where the shepherds were 'abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flocks by night, and lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them; and they were sore afraid. And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.' Such was the way that this glorious and awful event was announced, the coming among us of God's son in a bodily shape. And here in these fields, through which we are presently to ride, resounded in the stillness of night that heavenly music—oh, what would we not give to have heard one single note as it vibrated through the air in thrilling strains!—oh, for that one moment of real happiness, pure and true delight! The angels have long ago gone away into heaven; but here it was that Jesus was born, in order to purchase with His life and blood the never-ending life of entire joy for those who love and live for Him; that joy that will be perfect, nothing to mar it, *everlasting*, in heaven, where there will be no more sorrow, no more pain, and where all tears will be wiped away. Christian soldier, how can you help loving your Lord and Saviour who didst so much for you? And is it not worth a struggle long and fierce to gain the glorious victory in the end? and He will fight for you and with you on your side, if you ask Him, and the victory WILL be yours; but you must endure on to the end, so be brave, don't be a trembling coward, enter nobly and courageously into the thickest of the fight, and waver not. All these thoughts, then, it may be, crowd our brain while we stand in the cave where 'the Lord of all power and might' was

born. It is time to be going, our companions have left us alone here; for one brief moment we again bend and press the all-holy spot with fervent kiss; farewell, farewell to it for ever. We rise and leave the sacred cave, and join our companions.

A few words about Bethlehem before we again mount and ride away. Although it is mentioned by Jacob, it remained for long ages a small and unimportant place, at least such may be supposed, as its name does not appear among the list of villages assigned to Judah by Joshua, and is not again met with until the 17th chap. of Judges, where it is stated that the young Levite who became afterwards the first-fruit of the idolatrous house of Micah, was of Bethlehem-Judah. This is not much to its credit. The next event is even less honourable to it, for the terrible catastrophe which befell the tribe of Benjamin was directly connected with a woman of bad character from Bethlehem; this we can see in the 19th chap. of Judges. The story now brightens, but not until the time of Boaz and Ruth is anything pleasant of it related; but after that it becomes a place of great celebrity as the birthplace of David; and finally for ever is rendered glorious by the birth of Him who came after, namely, the Son of the living God. It will doubtless be perceived that I am almost quoting from Dr. Thompson's deservedly-famed work, 'The Land and the Book.' As already stated, I read it and re-read it before visiting the Holy Land, and have to thank it for much of my previous information, which I afterwards found from personal travel and observations to be usually very correct; but of course there are passages in every book one finds difficult in all particulars to agree with.

Bethlehem, in spite of the great and important events that have taken place there, never became large, and never will, for there is a fatal lack of water, and of certain other natural advantages necessary to create and sustain a great

city. Nearly all its present inhabitants belong to the Greek church, and number from 3,000 to 4,000. At one time there used to be a Moslem quarter, but Ibrahim Pasha destroyed it after the rebellion of 1834; but even this terrible vengeance failed to quell the turbulent spirit of the people. They are ever known by their quarrelsome nature, and if at the feasts in Jerusalem there is a row, they are sure to be found in it. It has been asserted that there is something in the water which renders the people sturdy, hard, and fearless; and it is curious enough that people of this kind have ever been found in connection with Bethlehem. David and his family, his mightiest captains, Joab and others, came from it, and they were fierce, terrible men. But there is one thing, perhaps, greater than the water, that caused these men to be valiant and brave. The Bethlehemites were noted shepherds, and that is saying more for them than many of us who dwell in the West are aware. A shepherd in Syria is very different to our shepherds. Not long ago I remember passing a man of rough exterior, but, it may be, of a kind, soft expression of countenance—I had no opportunity of noting in particular. He was fully armed: he wore a trusty sword, and carried a gun. I was told that he was a shepherd. It is most needful that shepherds should thus be prepared for a battle. They have to contend with all kinds of enemies. Roaming through wild gorges, valleys, and wadies with their flocks, they are exposed at all times to risks and dangers for the sheep; but night and day do they keep their faithful watch. The good shepherd is always ready to fight, and, if necessary, to lay down his life for the sheep; and even this they have sometimes to do. The Arab robbers of the desert are ever on the alert, as are the wild beasts, which roam about seeking after prey. At night, sometimes, the sheep are led into a walled enclosure or fold, but the leopards have even been known to leap over the barricade and make an onslaught

among the sheep; but in an instant, although the night may be pitch dark, the ever watchful shepherd is on the alert, and rushes to the rescue, knife or sword in hand. At other times, it may be necessary to fight hand in hand with the wild and bold Bedouin; the poor shepherds have sometimes to succumb, but only as their life's blood ebbs out. It was such a life that the youthful David had passed when he led his father's flocks over the hill, and thus the danger of meeting Goliath was in a way smoothed down for him, although the miracle is not one whit lessened, which rendered *him* able, an *unarmed* shepherd youth, to conquer and kill the powerful giant, sheathed as he was in a mass of armour. Danger, as we know, was not unknown to this boy. He had been called upon already to fight for his sheep, and had had two successful encounters with wild beasts, namely a lion and a bear. Doubtless, those among us who have read about and travelled in Africa are aware of the usual cowardliness of the lions in the south, but in the north it is very different, they are there fierce and dangerous, which they were without doubt when they existed in Syria; and bears too were no contemptible animals, their great strength is well known. Consequently, the young David must have felt fully aware of God's assistance, and hesitated not further to rely upon it in meeting Goliath.

Shepherds in Syria of the present are the same as they were in the past day; how beautifully applicable still to the scenes around is our Lord's parable of the Good Shepherd. He is our Shepherd, and He laid down His life for the sheep. It seems but little else than natural that the hireling would flee when imminent danger was at hand—for he careth not for the sheep; but the good shepherd, who *knoweth all his sheep and is known by all of his*, and calleth them all by name, *he* will not flee when the hour of danger approacheth; *he* will stand by his sheep. See

that shepherd in yonder plain, in the very midst of his flock; some go before and some follow after. How they all seem to love him, at least those immediately near; see them looking up into his face with languid, loving eye; some are even thrusting their noses into his hand; he calls them by their name, and they run joyfully up to him, and see, he is carrying a small ewe lamb in his arms; the small, pretty animal lies peacefully sleeping, with its head thrust into its master's bosom; the mother is close by bleating joyfully, and every now and then showing her love for the master by pressing gently up to him. See how he loves his sheep and is loved by them. Oh, yes! *he will*, if it be necessary, defend their lives with his. But see also there are some stragglers in the flock who lag behind, cropping off tit-bits of the tempting herbage which invitingly present themselves, and so occupied are they in looking out for such pleasures that they hardly seem to hear the voice of the shepherd who bids them beware, take care, for an enemy is nigh and ever watching his opportunity to snatch one from the flock. It is these stragglers who are ever in danger, and they seem to know it not until *too late*. The master uses kind as well as loving words to them, but all seems of little avail, their own pleasures and occupations engage their whole thoughts, and one by one in the course of time are they snatched from the flock—either by the robber Arab, or wolf, or other besetting danger. What an interesting lesson can one learn even from that flock and that shepherd; all seems so applicable to the scene as well as the words of Holy Writ. Such a picture is common enough in Palestine, and I have taken this opportunity of describing it.

There is still a custom in Syria which, perhaps, I should mention here, and that is in harvest time of people walking through the corn and plucking the ears, rubbing them in their hands and eating them; this is perfectly allowable

now, as it was in the time of our Lord, just as the Apostles did. The Pharisees did not object to the thing itself, only to the time at which it was done. They said it was work forbidden on the Sabbath-day; for they through their traditions had made man for the Sabbath, not the Sabbath for man.

I have seen the threshing-floors of the East, together with the machines used; they are slabs of wood turned up in front, drawn by a yoke of oxen or a single horse, all round about the floor; a man stands on the slab driving. By this means the corn becomes thoroughly shelled out, so that when the head man comes with his fan in his hand he is able 'throughly to purge his floor' of the chaff, and stow the wheat into his garner. With some exertion I managed to raise one of these threshing machines, which the natives call by the name of *mowrej*; it had iron teeth underneath. So I think we may certainly believe that this is the same kind of instrument that Isaiah refers to in the 41st chapter of his prophecies, 'Behold, I will make thee a new sharp threshing instrument having *teeth*: thou shalt thresh the mountains, and beat them small, and shalt make the hills as chaff. Thou shalt fan them, and the wind shall carry them away, and the whirlwind shall scatter them.' I had once or twice, when passing threshing floors, a ride on one of these machines, more for the sake perhaps of simply doing the thing than for anything else. The owners sleep at these threshing floors to prevent stealing, just as the wealthy Boaz did when Ruth came unto him. (Ruth iii. 2–7.)

I fear my 'few words' have multiplied into many. But now really and only just a few more, and then we must indeed mount and proceed on our journey, for the day is advancing.

There is not much gallantry in the East. Men are but very rarely seen in company with women here; indeed they look down upon them as inferior beings, and care not

to make companions of them. When an Arab divorces his wife, he says of her, 'She was my babîz (slipper), and I cast her off.' In this law and proverb of the Arab is represented the woman and her rights and claims. In the 25th chapter of Deuteronomy, 7 to 10, we read that when a man publicly 'in the gate of the city' refuses to take his brother's wife, 'then she shall come to him in the presence of the elders and loose his shoe from off his foot, and spit in his face, and shall say, So shall it be done unto the man that will not build up his brother's house. And his name shall be called in Israel, The house of him that hath his shoe loosed.' Can this Arab saying have its origin with this ancient law? However, it is one thing for a man to kick off 'his slipper,' and quite another to have it plucked off in scorn and contempt by the insulted lady. But I cannot say the comparing of a woman to a slipper is pleasant to our feelings; however, it is a deplorable fact that all her matrimonial rights can be kicked off like a worn babîz by her heartless and tyrannical husband. The insulting way in which the men talk of their wives is quite painful; 'my woman' is often the expression. When their wives are known to be ill, perhaps dying, and they meet with one that has lately come from the sick house, anything and everything will be inquired of before her. But, nevertheless, they keep their wives with the most jealous care. There is much contradiction in their customs.

CHAPTER IV.

FROM BETHLEHEM TO MAR SABA.

It is full time now that we return to our horses and prepare for the road. The order is accordingly given, and we take leave of this old and stately edifice of the church

of our Lord's nativity, also of the Latin convent and the good monks. All our party are now briskly strapping on saddle bags and a variety of other accompaniments, such as Jordan tin water bottles, rugs, &c., &c., some of which, when the first trot is broken into, prove not to have been very firmly secured; first, somebody drops a rug, then a water-bottle or two are seen lying in the road, and now a saddle-bag; there comes a midshipman riding back after his lost property making tender inquiries respecting it, passing along the cavalcade. Some of the scenes of our journeyings created much amusement. Many rode without a saddle, sitting on a contrivance like that used on horses in a circus, and without stirrups. The whole affair would occasionally slip round, when down would come the midshipman. The mules were very refractory, but 'very willing to go;' in fact, while the cavalcade was on the move *they would* go, with or without the will of the rider, and to stop them was a job indeed, some having no bits in their mouths. 'Keep back in front,' was often the cry, as one came running up from the rear with a midshipman pulling and tugging at the cord made fast round the animal's nose, seeming to have as much effect as if he were pulling at a stone wall. When the beast had had his little run he would pull up of his own accord. Sometimes, as sudden gusts of wind came, or, it may be, when the troop increased their speed into a gallop or trot, off would go a few hats, followed by the business of picking them up. Eager to do so, perhaps, one or two would leap to the ground without pulling rein, when off would go a riderless mule chased by its rider, and when nearly caught kicking out behind, and starting off again. I watched one very amusing episode of this kind: it was one of the mules in front ridden by a small midshipman; the animal dodged and dodged, with the little midshipman after him, being cheered and encouraged by those coming up behind. Now he held on to a piece of the saddle-cloth;

at this there was a clapping, but the animal kicked out, and he dropped his hold; off he went again continuing the chase, we all laughing heartily at the fun. At last, he met with success, but as even then the brute was not inclined to stand still, added to which, perhaps, there were no stirrups, it was no easy matter to vault on to his back.

Some of the trappings were very gay. My saddle-cloth must at one time have been very handsome—red cloth embroidered with gold, or metal resembling it. Many of the mules, as well as the horses, had bridles ornamented with shells, on various coloured ground-work; some were profusely decorated with bells, reminding one very forcibly of the lady in an old nursery rhyme, of Banbury Cross, who wore rings on her fingers and bells on her toes, so that there was music wherever she goes.

As on arrival at Bethlehem, so on our departure, we were beset on all sides by the sellers of carved mother-of-pearl shells, beads, rosaries, with many etceteras, the prices of which gradually came down as one after the other sprang into the saddle; for instance, a prettily cut shell of really superior work was offered me for 6*s.* (if I remember correctly), just before leaving I bought it for 3 francs (2*s.* 6*d.*). This certainly was the time to invest, and riding away down the narrow pathway leading into the valley,[1] I was tempted into buying articles of little or no use, for much about the same reason that the gentleman at the fair bought a pair of crutches—namely, they were so cheap. Gradually our importunate friends were left behind, and, with them, the oft-repeated cry of bacsheesh.

About 3 P.M. Bethlehem was left behind, and once again was the whole cavalcade under way, journeying towards Santa Saba in the Wilderness. For an hour or so we passed over rich soil and well cultivated. The fields where the

[1] In this valley, to the right of the path, are shown some fields, which are said to have been those of Boaz.

shepherds were watching their flocks by night, when they beheld the bright light and heard the angelic music chanted by the heavenly host, were pointed out on our left. By 4.30 P.M., or near about that time, the Wilderness of Suden was entered upon, and all around commenced to look barren and sterile. We soon now were winding over hill, valley, and rocky glade. Roads there are none, but the beaten track lay over sand and rocks, seeming at times lost altogether, so that I began to wonder how it was possible without a compass to find the way over such a wilderness of sand and rock. Two or three Arab encampments were passed during the afternoon, and we had an opportunity of seeing the Arab on his native element, the sand of the desert. The spots chosen for these encampments were always in some sheltered nook or wady; the tents are of a dark brown or black colour, and are small. I am not sure as to what material they are made of, but I understand it is from the skins of beasts in the rough state, hence the Arab name for them, 'houses of hair.' The many strange customs of the Ishmaelites I cannot pretend to enter into here, not proposing to fill my little book with such details, interesting though they may be. The Arabs, we were told, are all robbers; no exception is made. Their hand is against everybody, and everybody's hand is against them. They are ever wandering, ever roaming over the trackless desert. Blood for blood is for ever their maxim, and if an Arab is shot, revenge is sure to be taken upon somebody—it is their law. Their revenge is satisfied, if they cannot get hold of the slayer himself, by murdering the nearest kinsman they can capture, no matter how far removed that kinsman may be in a blood point of view. They, in their own way, obey this passage very strictly, but very unfairly, 'Ye shall take no satisfaction for the life of a murderer which is guilty of death, but he shall surely be put to death;' for, as just now said, if they cannot get the individual himself

into their clutches, their 'blood revenge' is satisfied by murdering an innocent man, provided he is of the same kin. No exception whatever was made, and we were told that all Arabs are robbers; but from after information there appears to be one single exception to the rule. This tribe of Ishmaelites live further north; they abide in tents the same as their brethren, but are not wanderers in the desert; they till the soil, pay taxes, and are industrious, but at the same time despise the dwellers in houses, and will not think of sanctioning one of their daughters to marry one of them. They, in their turn, are despised by the wandering tribes—robbers of the desert. These pests of the wilderness, the dread of honest caravans, will rob you of the last rag you have on your back, but will not shed blood if they can possibly help it. Their demeanour as they gallop up to inspect a travelling party is rather awe-inspiring—coming along at full speed on their beautiful Arab horses, and then halting with a suddenness that makes one expect to see them sent headlong from the saddle, armed to the teeth, long quivering spear in rest, gun slung over shoulder, and scimeter by side. However, there is but little to fear if the party are armed—say with good revolvers—the very appearance is quite enough—but a firm, steady demeanour is also necessary; if by inspiring with fear they can rob you they will; but by all the stories I heard in Jerusalem and elsewhere shots were never exchanged. Consequently, although one carries a revolver he is not likely to be called upon to use it, its very presence is sufficient protection; but to be unarmed is exposing oneself to great risk. There are, of course, exceptions to this rule, where in the north a whole troop of these mounted robbers swoop down upon parties, who see from the smallness of their numbers resistance would be unavailing; but such troops are not to be met with in this region, dangerous as it is, through which we are now travelling.

After riding a considerable time under a burning sun, several of our party began to feel the effects of thirst, so a halt was called near to one of these Bedawin encampments, to procure water. A few of our party advanced towards some Arabs who came up from the glen to meet them, being first cautioned to look after any loose property about them. The filth of these wandering dwellers in tents is almost beyond description, and perhaps just as well not described; it is difficult to imagine how human beings can exist in such a manner; swarms of vermin crowd their encampments, so much so, I understand, that in some cases the very soil seems to consist of fleas. They are predominant all over Palestine, and are so numerous in some places in the soil that, if I have not been misinformed, whole Arab encampments are occasionally obliged to be moved. The Arabs in all conscience can bear a great deal in this way, their skins being thoroughly seasoned, but when one's legs become actually black with fleas, it is even beyond their endurance.

After leaving the Arab encampment the nature of the scenery completely changed. All green disappeared, for there was some in the region of these tents. The country, no longer level, became hilly and extremely rocky. We traversed passes of the wildest description, with rocks above us on either side; desolation and stillness reigned supreme, but was now for the time broken by the unwonted noise of the several hundred hoofs of our animals, echoing through a bewildering labyrinth of wadies. On we marched, up and down, and down and up, on sharp ridges, in deep wadies, and over slippery rocks, or through stiff mud. It seemed perfectly astonishing what our horses would do and where they could go without coming to grief. But going down one rocky steep I personally nearly came to grief, my saddle once again slipped forward, it caused me some risk, but fortunately I did not go over the horse's head, otherwise my soft skin in all probability would have become painfully

acquainted with the hard rocks. The saddle-girths did not fit the fat barrel body of my horse. Twice during our ride from Bethlehem to Mar Saba did I have a mishap through this. Once it occurred in the depth of one of the narrow passes through which we rode; for a short time I was alone, nobody being near to assist; the winding of the pass concealed both van and rear from my view, so that I thought the whole cavalcade were on ahead; the solitude and silence were quite oppressive, not a sound broke the stillness. Here, then, was I alone in this, I felt, dangerous pass, our well-armed mounted Arab guard far ahead. I could not hide from myself how easy it would be for robbers to pounce out from behind some rocks, murder and rob me, but at the same time I had the comfort of feeling I was armed with a weapon I could rely on—my little Sharp's repeater. However, at the same time I did not relish being left behind in this wilderness of rocky passes; how could I find my way out of their mazy depths without a guide, and evening drawing near. But I had not much time to bother myself with such thoughts, when two armed Arabs on foot approached. 'Stand and deliver!' I didn't intend to, and, what was more, was not invited, for they—rascals as they looked—turned out to be two of our own foot guards—we had several on foot as well as mounted. This I did not at first know, and seeing them follow us thought more than once they were robbers on the look-out for a chance—say of stragglers, a horse becoming lame, &c. I am sure I humbly beg their pardon, for they were the very people to guard and assist such unfortunates, and they now assisted me. I was not the last of the stragglers; there were numbers behind me who now came straggling up and passed me, they were well looked after and guarded. I now saw how necessary it was to have a guard, and more especially for such a large party, with numbers of stragglers always in the rear. Presently we saw the van far ahead. The rocks and

general ruggedness of the pass would seldom allow of even our sure-footed animals trotting, so it seemed pretty hopeless for we stragglers to think of being able to reach the main body. This, however, was perceived in the front, and a halt called. The narrow pass broke here, widening into more open country, but all was barren and utterly desolate. Hills of sand and rock were passed, skirted, mounted, and left behind. The scenery was becoming wilder and more wild, until its very wildness was truly grand. Precipices were reached and passed, making the head giddy, and the brain reel to look into their ugly depths. But the worst of all was before us. The mounted guard in front were observed forming into single file, and the order was sent down the cavalcade, 'Single File,' which was uttered and repeated in all kinds of keys, and the various voices took it up as it travelled to the rear. Single file, I can assure you, was most necessary. The path before us was somewhat narrower than an ordinary foot-path for passengers on the side of roadways in an English town, but here it was sandy and could not apparently be trusted too near the edge. On the left was a frightful precipice, almost perpendicular; on the right we were walled in by the declivity of a hill; consequently there was no retreat, *along it we must go.* Seeing what was before us, some dismounted and led their horses, I being one of the number, feeling that I could not trust myself in the saddle. My horse seemed to prefer the outer edge, and was liable to kick when a horse behind came too near. And the saddle too, if anything happened to the girths, what then ——? but it is really quite horrible to think of it. On, on, the long line went with almost noiseless footsteps over the sand; not one word do I recollect being exchanged within my hearing the whole period of the most dangerous part of the undertaking. I walked inside, and so had my horse between myself and the precipice. I felt moderately comfortable, but every now and then looked

on ahead a little anxiously, to see how long the business was likely to last, but, one precipice past, another was at hand. However, we were rapidly on the descent, so their frightful depths gradually decreased as we descended little by little from our late giddy height.

As we neared the convent of Mar Saba my anxiety rapidly increased to see this *most wonderful* rock monastery of the desert. I had read much about it, and had seen pictures of it; but, after all, there is nothing like seeing for oneself, and soon my great curiosity was to be satisfied. Day was fast declining when the cries from the headmost party travelled back to us up the hill, that 'Mar Saba' was in sight. I looked with straining eyes from glen to glen, across pass and precipice, but nothing but rocky declivities met my view. Soon, however, far down into the desert valley I saw its towers. I will quote from Dr. Thompson in preference to giving my own description of the approach. When he and party arrived, it was later in the evening than when our own numerous concourse crowded through its portals, but, with Dr. Thompson, I may truthfully say: 'I shall never forget that evening ride.' Such another my aspirations do not prompt me ever again to undertake; once in one's life is quite sufficient. 'Our imaginations,' continues Dr. Thompson, 'had been held wide awake hour after hour by bad roads, doubtful guides, and the dismal notes of owls and jackals. The moon, rising over the brown hills of Moab, flashed and trembled on the Dea Sea, giving just light enough to make the crags appear more stern, and the chasms more horrible. At the Convent, two towers, one on either brow of the gorge, loomed up through the misty moonbeams, like grim old giants to guard the access. We entered through a low iron door, went down, turned through a second door, then down again by winding stairs, across queer courts and along dark passages, until we reached at length our rooms, hanging between cliffs

that towered to the stars, or seemed to, and yawning gulfs which darkness made bottomless and dreadful. I was struck dumb with astonishment. It was a transition sudden and unexpected, from the wild mountain to the yet wilder, more vague, and mysterious scenes of Oriental enchantment. Lights gleamed out fitfully from hanging rocks and doubtful caverns. Winding stairs, with balustrade and iron rail, ran right up perpendicular cliffs into rock chambers, where the solitary monk was drowsily muttering his midnight prayers. It was long after that hour before sleep visited my eyes, and then my dreams were of Arabs, and frightful chasms, and enchanted castles.'

CHAPTER V.

A NIGHT'S HALT AT MAR SABA CONVENT.

We arrived and dismounted outside the convent gate at 6.15 P.M., and, as usual at the end of a long day's ride, were truly glad to get a little rest. The whole day, or nearly so, we had been exposed to a broiling sun. I don't know how the others felt, but my head was all in a whirl, and I felt somewhat apprehensive that the sun had not done me any good. We got off our horses at the top of a small steep hill paved with smooth round stones, which led down to the massive gates of the monastery fortress—for fortress in a way it is, and necessarily so, in order to repel the attacks of the Arabs, who have robbed and murdered the inmates within its walls.

Preparations had been made for us, for we had not forgotten, when at Jerusalem, to forward intelligence respecting our wishes to visit the convent and remain there one night. The gates were opened, and our party poured in. Basins in large numbers, and water, were all ready for

an immediate refreshing wash, much needed after our long, tedious, and hot ride through the desert. In one moment coats and jackets were off, and the midshipmen turning to with a will. It being by this time dark, we could not discern much of the appearance of this wonderful monastery, but everything wore such a strange, weird-like appearance. A group of dark monks were collected above us in a kind of raised square court, looking down upon the lively scene being enacted below, but apparently not a word passed amongst them. It is quite impossible to attempt to describe or discern what manner of place this was while the deep gloom of night overshadows it, with only the dim uncertain light of the stars which cover the heavens as with a carpet. So let us wait until the dawn of day.

Our room—that is the one allotted to myself and eight others, namely, the captain of marines, assistant-surgeon, naval instructor, French instructor, three engineers, and myself—was situated close to what had once been a lion's den (more of which anon), and looked immediately down into the abyss of the Kedron. It was roomy and airy—two very necessary requirements for the accommodation of nine persons in such a climate. The beds were spread out on the stony floor. One basin only being supplied, we were obliged to take turns in using it. The supply of water was abundant, there being a well just outside our dormitory; and the wild depth of the bed of the Kedron served as a receptacle to empty the basin into. Being somewhat refreshed after our ablutions, and some of the sand and dust being removed, and the second dinner bell having rung, we repaired to the refectory for that important meal. The table accommodation being very limited—only two moderate-sized tables being available—the midshipmen's collation was spread out on the floor. Our table (a round one) enabled about ten persons to sit at it, namely, the bishop, commander, chaplain, staff-surgeon, assistant-surgeon, cap-

tain of marines, a lieutenant, an engineer, a naval instructor, and your humble servant. The room, not a very large one, permitted our whole party to crush into it. The heat was very oppressive with such a crowd in so small a space, the steam from the smoking viands adding to the rather more than genial warmth. The only outlet for the oppressive closeness of the air was by the door-way, and a very small window or port-hole (hitherto closed) deeply set in the heavy thick walls, as of a fortress. The scene of this dinner was one of the liveliest and most novel description it had ever been my good luck to behold. In spite of the steaming heat and the fatigue natural from a long day in the saddle under a broiling sun, appetites in general were uncommonly good, perhaps prodigious would be the best word to use. The clattering of knives and forks, combined with the rattling of tongues, made a curious kind of music. The varied positions, too, in which they (the midshipmen) were dining were very amusing. Many dined on their bellies (excuse my apparent vulgarity), and, as at Bethlehem, they had to stow very close. Never before, I expect, had this monastery in the desert beheld a similar scene, and perhaps never will again. All suffered more or less from the great heat, excepting the bishop; nothing seemed to affect him, either fatigue or heat. With one exception, all apparently had good appetites, and this poor fellow could scarcely eat anything, and had to retire from the table early. The heat, together with so much riding, it must have been that knocked him up. Dinner over, we removed to the other table to note down the events of the day—mine were put into a journal letter, which, as before mentioned, I very regularly wrote up. This letter I despatched from Jaffa, but have not (up to the date of writing this) had intimation of its safe arrival. Most of our remarks, I expect, were pretty short and concise. I, for one, was in a hurry to seek my couch, and did so about 10 P.M. Most

of our companions, I found, had already retired, and were making preparations for getting under the counterpanes, that being about the only covering supplied, and, indeed, in such a climate more would be unnecessary. In hotels, these coverlids are stuffed, and, with the sheet, are all that is supplied. I do not remember seeing such a thing as a blanket when on shore in Syria, although, at times, they would be most welcome, for there is plenty of cold weather in the higher parts—such as Jerusalem and neighbourhood. Even at the present time of the year cold is far from being unknown, especially at night, as we experienced. It will be remembered, also, how at this very time of the year, on that certain awful day Peter stood and warmed himself because of the present cold.

But now a few minutes' quiet for prayer, and then let us seek that rest which is so necessary.

My sleep was undisturbed, and the mournful cry of the jackal echoing from glen to glen was not heard by me, even if such existed in the vicinity, for such a wild, desolate, and barren spot I should almost fancy would be even too desolate for them.

We were up betimes in the morning, being called by a dragoman or guide. A refreshing wash in the cool water we drew from the well outside our room soon drove all sleepiness from our eyes, and we sat down to breakfast about half-past six. Even the early morning was warm, and the intense blueness of a cloudless sky foretold a broiling day. We were already some 2,000 feet below Jerusalem, but had several hundreds of feet more to descend before we reached the Dead sea level, which is said to be 1,300 feet below the level of the Mediterranean, and 4,100 feet below Jerusalem. But we are perhaps a little anticipating.

Arriving as late as we did on the previous evening, of course there was no time to see anything of the monastery

before retiring to rest, and besides we were tired, and felt little inclined for any further exertion before seeking repose. Therefore the tour of inspection was postponed until this morning after breakfast.

I longed with considerable longing to go over this wonderful convent; but now that I have seen all I wished with regard to it, I fear very much that I cannot convey anything like a true and correct idea of its real appearance, for the task is no easy one. From the pilgrims' apartment where we had breakfasted and dined, we first visited the tomb of Santa Saba, contained in a small chapel in the centre of the court, large enough only to hold about six persons. St. Saba, who founded the convent in the fifth century, when he visited Palestine, retired thither into this lonely desert, and lived the life of an anchorite in the den of a lion, vacated it may be by that noble and fierce animal in favour of the holy saint. This den is apparently a natural cavern imbedded deep in the rock, exactly suitable for the purpose for which we were told it was used, and penetrating into its depths one seemed almost to fear that possibly the original tenant might be met with. Here then first resorted the holy hermit St. Saba, and abode in this cavern alone with God. The solitude must indeed have been entire, but did not last very long, for hundreds of others flocked to this dreary region to be partakers of a life on earth 'alone with God,' to leave all and follow Him; hence the monastery was founded. It rests on and over the edge of the stupendous cliffs of the Kedron, in some cases overhanging the abyss, in others its apartments are imbedded deep in the hard rock. The approach to it yesterday, tired as we were, could hardly have otherwise than struck each one of us, as one of the most startling and singular scenes imaginable; as winding along that narrow shelf of the almost horizontal rock 'we looked down in the dry bed of the abyss, which is unrelieved by a single tree or patch of

verdure, presenting a spectacle of indescribable dreariness, sunk in a dead and mournful stillness unbroken even by the wild sound of the rushing torrents '[1]—which by-the-by have long ceased to rush—for the bed is perfectly dry. The cliffs round about the monastery are almost honeycombed with caves and caverns, probably partly natural, but shaped into abodes by the many hundreds of devotees who followed St. Saba into the desert. How well Mr. Bartlett in imagination goes back and visits scenes of yore. I must repeat his words. 'Imagination peoples these ancient cells with the saints and martyrs of an age for ever passed away, such as they are depicted with terrible truthfulness on the canvass of Spagnoletto and his school. Here the pale recluse, his knees worn by the flinty rock, his head resting on his hand, bends over some divine work of the early fathers, or with his crucifix before him, and his emaciated face streaming with tears, pours forth his penitential agonies; or thrown back on his rocky bed, with thin hands outspread, and a supernatural glow upon his face, lies fixed in a state of blissful ecstasy, like that of St. Paul when in the "third heaven," or, startled in his wild retreat by the Saracen spoiler, with the sword at his throat, welcomes with rapture the visionary crown of martyrdom, and as his blood pours forth, casts his dim eyes in rapture up to the far seen angelic choir, expiring in prayer and blessing.' Oh where, indeed, may we cry—where is the love of Jesus in this our present cold day? is it dying out? Are we forgetting all His love for us, and all He endured and went through for us because His sufferings were long ago?—we may forget Him in the wild turmoil of a busy world, amid its pleasure and excitements, but He will never forget us. Yes, indeed, we feel it hard to give up for Him even the smallest of our daily pleasures, but He laid down His life for us. Oh! yes, as far as it is convenient we will serve Him, but if we

[1] Bartlett.

do this and that, what will our companions or neighbours think? Yes, how can we hide from ourselves the fact, that it appears that most of the love for Jesus that remains in this cold, cold world seems to be shut up within such cloistered walls as these of St. Saba, through which we are pensively wandering. How can we be otherwise than thoughtful as we pass through and by 'the inexplicable maze of terraces and rock-hewn cells hanging over the glen; a scene so singularly wild, that verbal description can give little or no idea of it?'[1] How can we, in our very coldness, but be wonderstruck at the great love by which this almost unearthly and certainly incomparable building gradually came into existence, erected it may be wholly and entirely by the ever working, ever praying, holy monks? If our friends in England knew a little more about *the true* lives of these holy men, and how utterly without foundation are the many idle stories we read and hear about them to their detriment, from persons who are not only entirely ignorant of the life within a monastery, but who have themselves not one spark of Christianity or love for their God, would not there be a great revolution of feeling? Let me ask you, my friend in particular, who are now walking with me through this solemn monastery, this house devoted to prayer and love of God, thinkest thou why yon cowled monk who kneels before that altar in that chapel, so wrapped in earnest prayer that our footsteps seem not to reach his ear, thinkest thou why he came thither, and has left for ever the outer world? Now, do not be in a hurry to walk away, he heeds us not, our very presence is unknown to him and we can whisper our thoughts to each other without fear of disturbing his devotions, they are far too deep. Dost thou think that the monk leaves the outer world, and shuts himself within these walls to give way to sin? for some even pretend so to think. But methinks that can hardly be so,

[1] Bartlett.

for would it be necessary, supposing he wished for such a life? Does not the outer world openly countenance sin, and are not the arms of society ever open to him who is known to be living in actual sin? Then it cannot be that he has left the world, where to sin is easy, for this holy spot (where sin cannot abide), to indulge in it. Then why has he left all for this life? He has done it to be like unto St. Peter, who left his wife, his all, for the love of Jesus; to be like St. Matthew, to be like the shorn-headed, holy St. Paul, who was not only ready to be beaten but to die for the love of Jesus. But perhaps you will ask, why do monks wear that peculiar garb, that dress something like what St. John the Baptist wore, of rough coarse material with a girdle about their loins? It is their uniform, the badge of the soldier of the Lord. But perhaps again you may remark that monks lead idle lives. May I presume to reply that, from my experience, which is probably more than many possess, simply because they have not interested themselves on the subject as I have—from my experience their lives are far otherwise than idle ones; they are tillers of the soil; they visit the poor, and needy, and sick; they feed the hungry, they clothe the naked, and they rise night and day to prayer and sing praises to Him, who must and does smile upon all weak mortals who strive earnestly to serve Him, and Him alone. But I fear our conversation has become a little too loud, and if we do not go, we shall disturb that holy man in his devotions.

Let us hasten after the rest of the party; they are winding round a ledge that seems to overhang the yawning gulf of the precipitate Kedron bed. Well, again to quote from Mr. Bartlett, 'Certainly, if there exists a spot where the wildest dreams of imagination appear realised, it is within this convent, overhung and surrounded by horrid precipices, full of arched vaults and caverns, adorned with lamps and pictures of saints and martyrs, seen as they were by

the gathering gloom of twilight.' It was, of course, broad daylight when we went our visiting round, but still in some places there was so much gloom that the light of the sun failed to penetrate. The cave of the lion, for instance, necessitated the carrying lights to enable us to explore its depths; and *this* was the first abiding place of the solitary hermit St. Saba who founded this monastery. We were allowed to see into one of the monks' cells. The occupier of it had been in the monastery sixty years. One could almost imagine in his patriarchal face that the shadow of St. Saba had suddenly appeared. The dear old monk uttered no word as our party disturbed his solitude, but seemed ill at ease. We, of course, also visited the church, which is really splendid and 'blazing with silver and gold,' as says an old traveller; but beautiful and costly as the church was, I did not observe this 'blazing,' but, perhaps, the light was defective. The convent is Greek, and the church is decorated after the usual manner of Greek churches. We also visited a chapel, which, if my memory fails not, was wholly hollowed out of the hard rock, with the rough rock for its ceiling. In the dark recesses of this gloomy chapel, we were taken to a place where we were shown an apartment which contained the skulls of 14,000 martyred monks. What a sight! if all else we saw in this wonderful convent castle gradually vanishes from our memory, can we ever forget that vast heap of skulls, with grinning jaws and staring, eyeless cavities? This dread collection, I understand, consists of the various communities of the convent who have been massacred from time to time, for the building has been more than once stormed and the inmates slaughtered. It is, however, now of vast strength, and may well be termed a fortress monastery, and such it needs to be to repel the attacks of the savage and wild Bedawin of the desert, who is aware of the great wealth contained within its precincts, and would soon again tear

down all the costly ornaments of the beautiful church, &c., and, perhaps, slay its present inmates.

Our time is up, baggage mules are packed and loaded, and are moving up the hill. We must not linger; time will not permit. The sun is high, and the heat of the day begun. But we must procure some souvenirs of this most remarkable convent to assist our memories in after years of our truly interesting visit. I contented myself with buying about two dozen crucifixes.

CHAPTER VI.

FROM MAR SABA TO THE DEAD SEA.

Tuesday, 18th April, 1871.

It was past eight o'clock before a general move was made towards the horses; small pieces of stray luggage had to be collected together, &c., &c. We then led our horses away from the massive convent gates up the steep slippery paved roadway, and collected in a body above, waiting till the company was complete, when, forward for the Dead Sea, was the first order on the day's programme. The nature of the scenery through which we passed can pretty well be gathered from what has already been said of the previous day's journey; but we did not pass such frightful chasms or scale such giddy heights, and I, perhaps, was not singular among the party in having no wish to do so. Somewhat less than two hours' riding brought us among mountain precipices, through which and down among which we were descending by ten o'clock. At half-past we found ourselves traversing a sandy plain. The heat from above and the heat rising from the hot sand was very oppressive, and thirst soon began to make itself felt. We had, however, something now to withdraw our attention from the mono-

tonous waste and oppressive stillness of the desert. Our Bedawin mounted guard commenced wildly careering before us, lances now in rest, now held on high. They dashed about here and there amongst sandy hillocks, as if scouring the neighbourhood for some expected hidden foe. Hitherto they had ridden quietly at our head, but now suddenly life and fire seemed to be poured both into themselves and their horses. After observing their manœuvres for some time and seeing no enemy unearthed, it became evident that they were going through a sham engagement. Now each was separate, scouring the plain at full gallop, suddenly they rein in their horses, and so violent is the movement, that one expects to see the riders fly from their saddles, but not so, man and horse seem to be one. They wheeled round their animals and off they dashed full tilt at one another, lance in rest, while others were firing their double-barrelled guns, and then using them to parry lance thrusts. Now some are in full and wild retreat; their horses appear to fly over the desert waste, the riders resting on the very necks of their Arab steeds, others give chase at the same mad, headlong pace; neither whip or spur are apparently necessary; the race is as if for dear life, and the noble horses feel for their masters, their utmost speed is put forth and metal displayed —then away, away tear these wild men of the desert, on their as wild horses, sweeping with majestic speed their native plains. The rein is touched, and the headlong race is brought to a dead halt; there they stand for a moment, like statues. No panting, no increased breathing of either horse or man, to show the effects of the violent exercise they had so lately taken—at least I observed not a sign. The horses resumed their cat-like quietness and again took up their former position at our head. The scene had been most exciting, shown out to noble advantage by being in the dreary desert, and I dare say when in after years we tell the tale of our journey through the Wilderness of Judea

to the Dead Sea, this little scene, so interesting and so picturesque, will hardly be forgotten. It was like what one might read of in books and exciting romances but not see in reality. There is something so free in the wild Bedouin Arab as he rides his noble steed over the sandy soil of his desert home—there is a flashing fire from his deep-set, piercing eye which, when in towns, becomes for the time extinguished. He seems born for the desert—he cannot live in the close confinement, to him, of even the largest town.

It must have been somewhere about 11 A.M. that we sighted the northernmost part of the Dead Sea—the accursed lake. The journey so far had been very monotonous, but certainly, for a time, we had been much amused and even greatly excited by the strange performances of the Arab guard. Before we came in sight of the Dead Sea, the aspect of the country changed yet once again from flat desert to sterile mountains and passes, descending as by steps to the level of the plains below. *There* lay the Dead Sea beneath us in its deep cauldron, apparently near, but in reality several miles distant. We descended from pass to pass; still there was another and yet another steep declivity before us, although the plains seemed at our very feet. I am, and must be ever, sorry that my powers of description prevent me on such occasions as the present from doing justice to my subject and conveying a full and true idea of the remarkable scenery. The valley of the Jordan lay spread out before us—a desert utterly desert in the fullest acceptation of the word. It is embedded as it were between two ranges of mountains. On the west by the mountains we were descending, and on the east by those of Moab. Its blasted, burnt-up aspect is quite solemn and awe-inspiring. Chateaubriand well describes its surface as resembling the dry bed of the ocean, and perhaps a better simile cannot be. 'Its white and scorching sands, and yellow sulphurous heads, the evidences of awful convulsions, clothe it with

hues of eternal desolation.'[1] But the prophet Moses' description is the best—he says in Deut. xxix. 23, that 'the whole land thereof is brimstone, and salt, and burning, that it is not sown, nor beareth, nor any grass groweth therein,' and that is true to the letter, for such is the plain that is now before us. But we have some distance yet to go before reaching the foot of the hills, and have plenty of time to contemplate the remarkable scenery. The equal I had never seen in any of my travels, either in Africa, India, Arabia, Egypt, or any other part of the world I had visited; nothing could be compared to this (by God) accursed panorama. All around, everywhere and everything seemed to rest in the stillness of death. Not a living creature, save our own party, of any description was visible, neither bird nor creeping thing. The Dead Sea looked dead, and seemed utterly motionless; there was an awful, solemn, and oppressive stillness reigning on all around which struck one most forcibly. I had read all about this from the pens of various writers, and came well prepared as to what to expect, but the reality beat all. Yes, there must be indeed, and indeed there is still a curse hovering over this region—the silence of the heavy sulphurous atmosphere breathes it. There *can* be no mistake.

Arrived at the foot of the mountain we broke into a gallop, the midshipmen racing for the first arrival. Our horses had to wind and dodge through dried up, scrubby bushes, and my animal having a playful way of swerving or shying, once or twice somewhat more than unsettled me in my seat. The heat was very oppressive, but so seldom had we a chance of a good gallop that I gave my horse the rein and let him go his fastest. But gallop after gallop, and trot after trot, did not bring us to the Dead Sea; it appeared 'so near and yet so far.' However, away we went, not caring to be beaten or let our horses give in at what

[1] Bartlett.

apparently seemed such a short distance; so forward we galloped, occasionally leaving behind one here, who had dropped a Jordan water-bottle, and one there who had dropped a rug. But still we ourselves had by-and-by to pull up for a little breathing time. However, another short gallop, and we were riding along the beach. I dropped a handkerchief, but did not care for such a paltry thing to see the party ride forward and leave me behind. We arrived at mid-day (12.20 p.m.) when the sun was pouring down upon us. But no sooner arrived than the midshipmen vaulted from their horses, flung aside their clothes, and plunged into the bitter and salt waters of this accursed lake, and, indeed, so eager were they for a bathe, that although I had ridden smartly across the plain, I am under the impression I saw more than one head moving about over the water by the time of my arrival.

I will now endeavour, irrespective of any previous impressions formed from theoretical study, to give my own knowledge from personal observations at the Dead Sea, remarking that many authors are much given to exaggeration in their descriptions. I must try and not fall into the same pit. I did not bathe, but was a looker on for about one hour, if not more. The water of the Dead Sea possesses a great specific gravity and great buoyancy, which are given to it by the mineral properties it contains. Possibly from the present time being early summer, its density and buoyancy were less than it would have been later in the year during the still hotter months, when the volume of fresh water from the Jordan would be far smaller than what it was at present, the tributary streams from the surrounding mountains fewer, and no rain to swell its waters. As to not being able to sink, it was not so with our midshipmen, if I may judge from what I saw and believe what was told to me. It seems that sinking might be managed by holding the arms out of the water, but as

to floating with the water only a little above the waist, that is certainly a small piece of romancing. Such I had ocular demonstration was not the case. Swimming was not easy on account of one's legs persistently rising to and above the surface, while the heavier part of the body inclined to go down, immersing the head. Floating on the back was easy, so that lying on the water could be managed without moving a finger, and one officer told me he found he could lie on the water face downwards. The taste of the water was bitter and salt, extremely sharp, and once in the mouth the effects thereof were not easily got rid of. Of course the pain of getting any in the eyes was considerable, and not soon forgotten. Some of our party suffered not a little from the effects of this bathe in this bitterly salt lake, and much they longed for the coming dip in the sweet, fresh, and cool waters of the Jordan. There was a breeze blowing, which considerably cooled the heated air, although the wind did not feel wholesome. The breeze, although not strong, *caused a ripple over the surface of the water.* Now, of course I do not like to pit my remarks against such writers as Chateaubriand and others, but how could I otherwise than believe my own senses of feeling and seeing? I felt the breeze and I saw the ripple. Chateaubriand in his travels remarks—'The strand, bestrewed with stones, was hot; the waters of the lake were motionless, and absolutely dead along the shore.' A few lines further on he says, 'A strong breeze, without cooling the air, produced only a slight undulation on the bosom of the lake; the waters, charged with salt, soon subsided by their own weight, and scarcely broke against the shore.' The only way I can account for such statements is that the time of his visit must have been at a very different season to the present, and the lake in a very different condition. The water we found excessively clear and transparent, but the ripple over its surface did not apparently differ from that on other pieces of water.

Its buoyancy I have already remarked on, but I am totally at a loss to account for the statement of Strabo, that, 'persons going into it up to their middle were borne up.' The remarks of Josephus on the same subject may be taken for what they are worth, knowing his often great want of truthfulness; he says, 'Vespasian tried the experiment, by ordering several persons who could not swim to be thrown into the lake with their hands tied behind them; and that all floated, as if impelled by a subterranean current.' Maundrell's remark, that it 'bore up his body with uncommon force,' I can easily believe. Pocock's statement is also, I believe, true to the letter. He says, 'I found I could lie on it in any posture, without motion and without sinking. It bore me up in such a manner that when I struck out in swimming my legs were above the water, and I found it to be difficult to recover my feet.' Mr. Stephens, who visited the lake some thirty or forty years ago, says that he could have read while lying on the water, but I very much doubt whether he could, as he says, have also slept on the water; unless he could do so while rolling over occasionally. Now sitting here as we are on the banks of this very sea, we have ample opportunity of making correct observations from the gambols of some fifty or sixty midshipmen, as well as others who are sporting in its waters.

But let us now discuss other matters of great interest respecting this forlorn, death-like sea, while we refresh ourselves with a few hard boiled eggs and a little water, just to fill up a vacuum that already exists, for our regular lunch will not be until we reach the Jordan. Sea of Death, yes, indeed, it is that—nothing living to be seen around, and there is nothing living in its waters—a fish, dead, of course, was picked up on the beach, but it was a fresh water one, impelled down by the rush of Jordan's stream.

We, or perhaps in this instance I should say *I*, felt the lassitude complained of by Bartlett while in this region;

there was something depressing and oppressive not only in the scenery but in the air one breathed, and the growing lassitude seemed to increase the longer we were here, so that I began to wish to be gone. We sat under the cloudless sky without a vestige of shade; our horses wandered about at pleasure, but some few were secured to part of a tree that must have been swept down by the Jordan, and thrown on the beach in some winter storm.

The length and breadth of the Dead Sea are variously stated; I suppose a correct estimate cannot well be arrived at. Robinson gives the length about thirty-nine geographical miles, and breadth at widest part, Engedi, nine miles. Bannister gives seventy miles length, and from ten to twenty broad, and I feel more inclined to take his estimate. No boat has ever been known to cross it from the time it engulphed the cities of the plain. The fatal story of the adventures of Costignan may well be remembered; he with his servant attempted to explore it. On the third day, I think it was, their water failed; their sufferings were intense; they had to make coffee with the bitter waters of the lake; their strength next failed; and their bodies were found on the beach by some Arabs, that of the unfortunate Costignan was a corpse, but the servant survived for a time. Such is the sad story, in brief, as far as my memory will enable me to relate it, of the only would-be explorer of the Dead Sea. Respecting the far-famed 'apple of Sodom,' I saw nothing that would answer the description of M. Chateaubriand's 'golden fruit full of bitter seed.' This remarkable fruit or vegetable has been so widely discussed by such a multitude of writers, that to go further here into the overridden theme would be unpardonable; and of course to give an opinion upon the subject, from so short a visit and research, I cannot pretend to do. There may be or there may not be such a fruit. I humbly believe it quite possible for it only to exist in some imaginative brain of an adven-

turous traveller of bygone days. It is described as resembling a large apple or orange of bright deceitful colour, growing in clusters of three or four, 'yellow, when ripe, fair to the eye; but when struck exploding with a puff, being chiefly filled with air,' or as others say with ashes. It is, perhaps, from the very doubtful existence of this fruit that botanists have not yet found a name for it, unless, indeed, it has been christened as mentioned by Beeton, namely, the 'Ascelepias procera.' Some miles from the Dead Sea, when riding near Jericho with Dr. Harris, he pointed out to me in some bushes a small, round, yellow fruit, somewhat smaller than a Maltese apricot. This same must have been what Mr. Jolliffe saw, from whom Dr. Bannister quotes, 'a shrub five or six feet high,' about half a mile from Jeresh, 'on which grew clusters of fruit, about the size of a small apricot, of a bright yellow colour, which, contrasting with the delicate verdure of the foliage, seemed like the union of gold with emeralds. *Possibly*, when ripe, they may crumble into dust upon any violent pressure;' and in a foot note of Bartlett's 'Walks,' it is mentioned, 'We brought home a small yellow fruit, the rind of which is hard, though brittle; the seed within much resembles ashes.' So perhaps, after all, we really did see the very far famed 'Apple of Sodom,' magnified as it has been by the wonderful stories of travellers. I think it a great pity that they should so pull the long bow, to the deception of those who have not the opportunity of seeing for themselves.

And now let us make the very best of this our own opportunity (most likely the only one we shall ever have), while sitting on the banks of the Dead Sea, to contemplate its bygone dreadful history. The sun truly is scorching, but let us bear with that in patience. Have you a Bible? Then let us see and read for ourselves the awful story therein. The names this lake used to bear, and still does, are various: 'Lake of Sodom,' 'Dead Sea' (because nothing can live

in its waters), 'Sea of the Plain,' because it is situated in the wide-spreading plain of Jordan; 'Salt Sea,' from the extreme saltness of its waters; 'East Sea,' because it is east of Judea, and Josephus calls it 'Lacus Asphaltites,' that is, the bituminous lake, on account of the vast quantity of bitumen with which its waters are impregnated. This lake occupies the southernmost extremity of the plain of Jordan, and covers what was the ancient fertile and beautiful valley of Siddim, rich and luxuriant. It was here where the five cities, known by the name of the 'Cities of the Plain,' once were, namely, Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, Zeboim, and Zoar. The last was preserved at the intercession of Lot, while the others were totally destroyed by fire. This mysterious lake, or 'sea of molten lead,' as it has been described, being bound on either side by a lofty range of barren mountains, causes the perpetual silence which hangs over it to be a silence unnatural, and constantly and for ever reminding the passer by or traveller that the region is cursed of God. A passer by is of rare occurrence, and we did not meet with even so much as a wild Arab of the desert. I personally saw *nothing living* of any kind on or near this accursed spot, and the awful stillness of this blasted region impressed me deeply. I was told by one of the midshipmen that he *had* seen something alive and move among the dried up bushes near; but with me there was nothing of the kind to break the solemn spell. Some have even averred that birds will not even fly over the water. I do not believe this, but I saw none myself. Dr. Clarke, describing the view from a distance, represents it as 'enclosed with mountains of prodigious grandeur;' but there is something more than that in their solemn, death-like, sentinel appearance as they look down frowningly upon the vast heavy sheet of water that lies between them, the depth of which cannot be known, but has been given as 1,300 feet. I have read that every traveller who has visited the spot

'represents it as the most frightful and desolate the imagination can conceive, as if the country which was so signally wicked as to require the exterminating hand of God, should bear upon it in all ages the marks and evidences of his righteous displeasure.' 'Be sure thy sin will find thee out.' Remember before the flood how the people 'eat and drank, married and gave in marriage;' they heeded not the warning of God; they stayed not the hand of sin; they believed not that God would punish. True, the punishment was long, very long in coming; but come at length it did in its full, fearful awfulness, as again, now, with the cities of the plain. Truly God 'is merciful and of great kindness;' but beware, tempt him not, give up that foolish clinging to a useless, unsatisfying sin; the gratification is short, and not worth having; it lasteth not; while it endangers to a fearful extent the *everlasting* happiness of your body and soul. Is it, then, think you worth your while for such a paltry, shining bauble, which will soon pass away, to risk so much? All was of no avail; these sinful cities would not listen; they preferred the pandering to their evil passions, and giving way to sinful lust. Destruction came; fire from above, fire from below; and see before you the result.

Truly may all declare that they never saw desolation equal unto this desolation. Lamartine observes: 'The shores are completely deserted; the very air is infected and unhealthy. We ourselves felt its influence during the few days we passed in the desert. A great depression on the head and a feverish sensation attacked us, nor did it quit us until we were quit of its atmosphere. The surface of the sea everywhere presents the same aspect; it is transparent, it glitters, it pours upon the desert which surrounds it the reflection of its waters; it attracts the eye, and rouses the thought; but it is *dead*. Motion and noise are no more. Its waves, too heavy for the wind, are still, and no white

foam plays on the pebbles of its shores; it is a sea of petrifaction.'

It has been said, that fragments of walls and palaces have been seen in the Dead Sea, and this statement it appears has been confirmed by persons of weight, such as Maundrell and Father Han. Nothing of the kind was observed by any of our party, although some ventured out a considerable distance from the shore. But if any such sights are really ever visible it must be when the water is much lower than what it now is, and doubtless the great heats of summer in this region must create a vast evaporation. Maundrell declares that he failed himself to see any ruin, although he diligently surveyed the waters. 'But yet,' he says, 'I must not omit what was confidently asserted to me by the Father Guardian and the Procurator of Jerusalem, both men in years, and seemingly not destitute of either sense or probity; viz., that they had actually once seen one of these ruins, that it was so near the shore, and the water so shallow at that time, that they, together with some Frenchmen, went to it, and found there several pillars and other fragments of buildings.' I do not think that we have any right to look upon such stories as 'dreams of imagination.' There was always, as far as we know, a lake in the lovely smiling valley of Siddim, which, after the destruction of the cities, must have increased in volume and continued doing so, through a period of nearly 4,000 years, until the level of its surface at nearly all times must be very far above the grandest of these ruins. The process of submergement probably was very gradual, for it was by fire not water that the cities were destroyed. As to portions of ruins being at times visible, I should think it quite possible, although so many thousands of years have passed away since the catastrophe. The waters of the Dead Sea petrify and preserve, they do not destroy. The ruins of ancient Thebes on the Nile's banks are still seen; the

pyramids of Egypt have outlived long centuries, and the Tower of Babel may be traced on the banks of the Euphrates. Then why not, even far more probable under the circumstances, that these present ruins should exist, and that they should at times be visible as monuments of the judgments of God? At one period now past certainly more frequent than at the present, but now possibly only during the long continued droughts of summer, can these monuments be seen. The petrifying properties of the water are proved; for if a branch of a tree or a bone of an animal fall into the lake, it becomes petrified and preserved from putrefaction.

There have been many and learned discussions as to the immediate cause of the destruction of these cities. We read in Gen. xiv. 10: 'And the Vale of Siddim was full of slimepits.' Now my ideas, I wish it to be understood, are not original but simply borrowed, culled from various readings. 'Slime pits' more properly rendered are 'pits of bitumen.' Then it seems probable that now, as at the time of the Flood, the inhabitants were involved in destruction, both from above and below and on all sides; 'that the earth opened its fountains of lava, or pitch, ignited by subterraneous combustion; while a fiery shower from above expedited and ensured their utter destruction.' If we look on the map we find Zoar located close to where the destroyed cities were; so it is plain that the volcanic eruption and fire from heaven were confined in a miraculous manner to the annihilated region—for, as we know, Lot found safety in Zoar, although it was a city in this same plain and only a few miles distant. This distinctly shows that the district was destroyed by no ordinary phenomenon, such as an earthquake or volcanic eruption, but by the vengeance of a justly offended God. 'And he (Abraham) looked toward Sodom and Gomorrah, and toward all the land of the plain, and beheld, and, lo, the

smoke of the country went up as the smoke of a furnace. And it came to pass, when God destroyed the cities of the plain, that God remembered Abraham, and sent Lot out of the midst of the overthrow, when he overthrew the cities in the which Lot dwelt. And Lot went up out of Zoar, and dwelt in the mountain, and his two daughters with him; for he feared to dwell in Zoar;' for it was so near the plain, or rather that part of it which was burning together with the cities. Previous to the awful catastrophe how more than touching are the pleadings of Abraham with God that he will have mercy and not destroy the cities; and He in His infinite goodness promises at last that even if ten righteous persons can be found He will not destroy; but the small number of ten is not to be found and the terrific drama begins shortly afterwards. The story is a grand and awful one, and how deeply interesting to us while sitting here to contemplate the dread scenery of the tremendous event.

We can almost fancy now we see the one righteous man Lot in yonder (now burnt-up) city, holding a conversation with two men—the angels sent to destroy. They say, 'We will destroy this place; the Lord hath sent us to destroy it.' Lot tells the same to his sons-in-law, but they seem to doubt the truth. Next morning the angels hasten to Lot, and say, 'Arise, take thy wife, and thy two daughters, which are here; lest they be consumed in the iniquity of the city.' But even *he* lingered, so that the men had actually to lay hold of him, his wife and daughters, and pull them away outside the city. The Lord then tells him to escape for his life to the mountains, lest he be consumed, and he is forbidden to look behind. Lot then pleads to be allowed to flee to the little city of Zoar, which is much closer at hand. God graciously gives him permission, and saves this city for his sake, saying, 'See, I have accepted thee concerning this thing also, that I will not

overthrow this city, for the which thou hast spoken. Haste thee, escape thither; for I cannot do anything till thou be come thither.' By the time Lot reached Zoar the sun had risen, and then commenced the awful scene. Brimstone and fire *were rained* upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah. Picture for one moment the terrific sight! See the crowds of people running here, there, and everywhere, shrieking and screaming with agony. But still the fire pours from heaven upon their devoted heads. See them wringing their hands in maddened anguish and dire pain! Their eyes start from their head; whole multitudes are tearing at one another, knowing not what they do. Their blood boils; their flesh dries up, cracks, blisters, and falls from their bones. Crowds and crowds rush together; their garments are in flames; they reel, they stagger, they fall to the ground, foaming with agony as the devouring fire licks up their heart's blood. Whole masses of human bodies lie about in hillocks, huddled together in blazing heaps. But the scene is too fearful; we can gaze upon it no longer. Let us look away. 'And He overthrew those cities, and all the plain, and all the inhabitants of the cities, and that which grew upon the ground.' Such, then, was the vengeance of God upon those great sinners who once occupied the fertile plain of Siddim, which now lies engulphed in this Sea of Death.

The sulphurous vapour said to be seen rising from the Dead Sea I did not observe, nor any of our party, I think, and I fancy it only to have been created by some vision-seeing brain. The nature of the soil is bituminous, as described in Gen. xiv. I have brought away with me a specimen of the bitumen made into a small bowl, which I bought in Jerusalem. Hot springs and volcanic substances, such as lava, sulphur, pumice, and basalt, are, I understand, found in the vicinity of this lake. As to the actual nature of the surrounding country, much still has to

be discovered respecting it. It may, I think, be deduced from the nature of the soil, and the biblical description of it, that the cities were not buried in cinders, as Pompeii and Herculaneum, but that from the very plain issued forth molten lava to assist in the dreadful general destruction, so that the miserable inhabitants were involved on all sides, 'from the earth and from the air, in a deluge of fire.'

Well, I think our ruminations have now very nearly come to an end, and pretty nearly time they did, for the heat is very scorching, and makes anything irksome, even thinking. 'All out!' is the cry, and the midshipmen swim towards the beach; they have had a good long bathe, and plenty of floundering about, like so many porpoises. It's all very well while they are actually in the water, but presently, when the sharp, bitter fluid is drying upon them, I'll warrant they'll feel some stinging effects. While they are dressing, and while I am preparing my horse to resume the journey, I may as well for one moment go back to a remark I made a short time ago, and that is, that there has always been a lake here. Perhaps I should have been more correct had I stated that the river Jordan broadened here, as it flowed through the fruitful valley of Siddim, which it watered on its journey to the Red Sea; for Mr. Burckhardt, from personal observation, seems assured that at one time it did empty itself ultimately into the Red Sea, before it became absorbed in the Lake of Sodom, whose bed it appears was first formed after the destruction of the cities by the sinking of the plain, and the waters of Jordan gradually spread themselves therein, and deepened; and as the valley sank, so the southern outlet became cut off. The nature of the waters is only accounted for by the nature of the soil, and the enormous evaporation makes any outlet unnecessary, although such enormous volumes of fresh water daily, hourly rush in and mingle *their* sweetness with *its* bitterness.

But come along! the time's up. Vault into the saddle! Our subject doubtless is a very wide and interesting one, but we can afford no more time for it now. The cavalcade are all mounting, and the headmost have commenced to march. So let us follow them, and 'Forward for the Jordan!'

CHAPTER VII.

FROM THE DEAD SEA TO THE JORDAN.

The cavalcade struck across the desert plain obliquely, following Hurman, the head dragoman. We bid farewell to the Dead Sea at 1.20 P.M. We took, I suppose, the usual route (but track I recollect none), and followed in much about the steps of Mr. Bartlett and his party when there about thirty years ago, for he says:—'We did not, however, ride along the lake shore to its marshy embouchure, but struck obliquely across the sandy plain, to the bathing-place of the Greek pilgrims; and never, certainly, during many wanderings in the East, do I remember to have seen or felt so complete and sudden a prostration of energy as was apparent in all our party. At every step our horses sunk into the sandy crust, which emitted sulphurous odours, and reflected the fiery glow of the cloudless sky in our faces. We thought of the Crusaders and their armour, and wondered not that exhaustion and thirst should have been more fatal than their Saracen enemies. On such a day, poor Costignan, after his unfortunate coasting voyage round the Dead Sea, was found expiring on the sand.' Our own party did not seem to be refreshed from their late bathe, and there was more or less silent dejection observable. Some wished they hadn't bathed, and complained much of disagreeable, prickling feelings; for now, as the pores of the skin became open, the sharp, bitter substances

of the lake found entrance. The ride this time was not very long, being only about one hour, but still quite long enough for an attack of thirst to visit the cavalcade; and, besides, we had been several hours exposed to a fierce sun, which poured down its scorching rays upon our heads. The horses bore up wonderfully, and trudged along as if quite used to it, and nothing out of the common; and doubtless to them it was not—but to us, very few had endured the same before. My own experiences in India and Africa had certainly exposed me to as great heat; however, there were many who had only now left England for the first time, and they, although silent, must have felt greatly the scorching fierceness of the sun. The desert over which we were passing was as flat as a table; its monotony unrelieved by anything. Anxiously did we soon commence to consult our watches; look ahead and ask how far off Jordan we were. Half an hour? Then we had come only half way. Patience and endurance, I think, are both virtues, so we sat quietly in our saddles until the refreshing sight of a strip of verdure on ahead gladdened our gaze; this marked the course of the river Jordan, that most famous of all rivers in the world, as well as the most blessed of all streams. The very sight of the trees and of the green verdure acted as a stimulus; our strength was renewed, and we didn't think so much about the heat.

We rode up to its banks which were very precipitate, and were warned not to go too near, as the sandy soil was likely to give way, then down both horse and rider would go. The Ford was yet some distance up the river, and the cavalcade wound along its serpentine banks, anxiously looking out for the first peep of it. I wish I had a true and real picture of the arrival at the ford. The rush towards and into the cooling stream—the copious draughts of the water taken by both horses and men. My own horse got clear away from me and into the river and get

him out I could not. Our horses, poor creatures, seemed to think they had as much right to bathe and to drink as ourselves, and accordingly took permission to do both. Oh! for that delightful bathe that was now before us. How eagerly the Dead Sea bathers plunged in to get the relief they longed for, and soon, very soon, all former inconvenience and pain were forgotten as they dived, splashed, and plunged in the delicious river. It was not long before I, too, partook of the delights of that bath in the sacred stream of Jordan's hallowed water. The current swept along at great rapidity, and now and then some native came passing along with it, holding on to a bawk of wood or a portion of a tree. We had been all previously cautioned not to venture too far into the stream for fear of being swept down toward the Dead Sea and perhaps drowned. But this caution and this danger were heeded not by the midshipmen, and a very short time after the bathing began several were running about on the opposite banks, 'on the other side of Jordan.'

This bathe was really grand fun. Nearly the entire party, so lately sweltering under a burning sun in the desert, were now in the cool waters of this lovely little river; how perfectly all seemed to be enjoying themselves. Here was a party having a splashing match, beating the water almost white, the old and the young ones all alike—all for the time gave way to childish sport. Others were seen copying the natives and coming down stream at a great rate in spite of all warning. Well, although, perhaps one preferred a little quiet paddling about, it did one's heart good to see the fun. And now just glance at the banks of the river and say, did you ever see such an old clothes shop? The sight at the Dead Sea was not a patch on this, for there space enabled the various costumes to be spread about; here, there, and everywhere,—but here the unrobing room comparatively was very limited. Just look at the 'lots' of

clothes heaped up on the banks—so great was the haste to jump into the river, that but little time was expended in arrangement. Now would have been the time for the Arabs of the desert to gallop down. What a grand seizure they could have made, and stocked a whole market with clothes—besides the heaps of gold and silver watches, chains, purses, &c., &c. But don't let us be in much of a hurry to joke, for it is no laughing matter, when one comes out of the water, to find, for the life of him, he cannot discover his 'lot' of clothes, among the from 70 to 100 other 'lots.' 'Surely,' he mutters to himself, looking round, 'this must be about the spot I went in, but perhaps somebody has heaped his things on mine.' Up and down, in and out the maze of shirts, coats, boots, socks, waistcoats and etceteras (am I not polite?) he wanders disconsolately, when at last some familiar article catches his eye and he pounces upon the missing heap. The hot sun takes the place of towels, although some are possessed of such luxuries—dressing is not quite so rapid as it may be, as perhaps a shoe or a sock, or something else, has been kicked away, and 'a hunt the slipper' kind of business has to be gone through. After the bathe of course we were very thirsty, and a very thoughtful individual had come all the way from Jerusalem to supply our wants. He had set up a stall under a tree and was retailing out lemonade, made from the charming muddy waters of the sweet Jordan.[1] Of course 'money was no object under such circumstances,' and 'the gentleman from Jerusalem' could ask what fancy prices he pleased. I fancy this man must have managed to travel in the company, perhaps with the muleteers, for we met him again at a halting place between Jericho and Jerusalem, with his lemonade and oranges all ready. It was now about 3 P.M., and the joyful intelligence

[1] Jordan water, although muddy, is a sweet, refreshing drink.

that lunch was prepared and waiting circulated rapidly. The meal was spread out on the ground under a clump of trees in the grove just above the bathing place; we accordingly all trotted off to the indicated place and squatted ourselves down upon blankets placed there for the purpose. This was our second open air picnic lunch since landing at Jaffa and in quality far surpassed the one partaken of on the other side of the hill country of Judæa. I shall not soon forget the fearfully tough lumps of camel or some such meat. An ostrich might possibly have digested them, but with us it was out of the question. However, on this present occasion we had good fare and enjoyed it. I shall ever look back with pleasure to that lunch on the banks of the Jordan. All the party seemed so happy and contented, in spite of being par-boiled by the sweltering heat. Brandy and water and lemonade were the chief drinks; we had good appetites, especially the midshipmen, who were always ready for a meal and never failed to 'come up to time' on such occasions; but, as may be believed, there was far more drinking than eating—but they, 'the drinks,' never became exhausted, while here, the brandy and lemonade, large as was the supply, may soon have vanished, but close to us ran the river, and all our combined powers could not exhaust that. Our lunch on Jordan's banks ended by one of the dragomans, or guides, coming round with a bag or basket full of large oranges, and handing one to each of us. With the midshipmen this would have been too long a business—so numbers of eager hands were uplifted to catch the juicy, grateful fruit as it was thrown among them.

From the intensity of the heat, it was thought advisable not to continue the journey until the sun was a little lower in the heavens; even in the shade it was extremely hot. Our faces were much burnt, and the skin from our noses was peeling off. One of the officers was in possession of a

box of 'puff powder' (I think it's called); he handed it to several of us, and we dabbed some of it over our faces; it was cooling, and gave relief; but the look of the thing was very strange. The contrast between the white powder and the red faces was quite ludicrous. There is about one hour more to get over before starting. How shall we expend it? It is a valuable hour, and not a moment of it must be lost. Well, first of all, let us go down to the river, and fill our bottle with Jordan water, and dip some rosaries and beads we bought at Bethlehem in its stream, and then we will lie down on its banks under the shade of one of these trees, and seek a little quiet, restful repose, while we think over and speak of the interesting events in connection with the holy stream, the world-famed river, Jordan. Dear me, now that we are in the sun, what heat! Let us fill our bottles as fast as we can, and beat a hasty retreat before we are metamorphosed into roast legs of mutton, or something of a similar nature. Oh! here is the sheikh of our Arab guard. What a curious salutation he gives us! He first presses his heart, then forehead, and then lips; such is the Arab salutation. How wonderful! but he does not seem to mind or hardly feel the heat of the sun. Our water bottle filled, we return into the shade, and follow the example of the officers we see about stretched at full length on the ground under the trees. I have here my Bible, and some useful notes from Dr. Bannister's 'Geography of the Holy Land.' The Jordan 'takes its name from Yar, a river, and Dan, a small city at the foot of Mount Hermon, near the spot where the river takes its rise. Jordan signifies, therefore, the river of Dan. According to Josephus, its true source is in the Lake Phiala, about twelve miles from Cæsarea Philippi, or Dan, whence it flows underground, and emerges from the cave Pancion, where it bursts forth with great noise, and unites with two other streams. This latter spot is, however, considered by Burckhardt, and most modern tra-

vellers, to be the true source or head of the Jordan. It flows due south through the centre of the country, intersecting the Lake Merom and the Sea of Galilee, through which it is said to pass without mingling with its waters, and then rolling onwards, seventy miles further, loses itself in the Lake Asphaltites, or Dead Sea, into which it rolls a considerable volume of water, creating so strong a current that the most athletic and expert swimmer is unable to cross it' (our midshipmen did, however, do so, great as the difficulty may be). 'Dr. Shaw states that it discharges daily into the Dead Sea about 6,090,000 tons of water. The whole course of the river is about 100 miles, measuring in a direct line; but computing its windings, it must be 150. In some places it is fordable; in others it has a depth varying from six to twelve feet. The river has two banks; the lower one was formerly subject to inundation about the time of barley harvest.'

As we sit here and watch the rapid current flowing on, how great the miracle appears which divided the stream, and enabled the Israelites to pass over; for at the time the rush of the stream must have been far more violent than what it is now, as it was then overflowing all its banks. However, the waters that came pouring down from above were made to stand upon an heap, and were divided from the rest. Let us turn to Josh. iii. 15, 16, 17: 'And as they that bare the ark were come unto Jordan, and the feet of the priests that bare the ark were dipped in the brim of the water (for Jordan overfloweth all his banks all the time of harvest), that the waters which came down from above stood and rose up upon an heap; and those that came down toward the sea of the plain, even the salt sea, failed, and were cut off: and the people passed over right against Jericho. And the priests that bare the ark of the covenant of the Lord stood firm on dry ground in the midst of Jordan, and all the Israelites passed over on dry ground,'

ver. 18: 'And it came to pass, when the priests that bare the ark of the covenant of the Lord were come up out of the midst of Jordan, and the soles of the priests' feet were lifted up unto the dry land, that the waters of Jordan returned unto their place, and flowed over all his banks, as they did before.' I fully agree with Bannister's statement, that 'the crossing of this rapid torrent by the Israelites, at the time of its overflowing, was even more miraculous than their passage through the Red Sea.'[1]

The great event of our Lord's baptism must have taken place at this part of the river, for there is no other near that would answer the purpose. Yes, I indeed think that this is the very place, and that it was here where the Holy Trinity was manifested; for 'Jesus, when He was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon Him: and lo, a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.' God the Father spake, while on the head of God the Son alighted God the Holy Ghost, in the form of a dove. Thousands of pilgrims from various parts of the earth come here yearly to drink of the holy water, and bathe in its sacred stream, 'and to dip in it the clothes in which they are to be buried.' The windings of the Jordan have only been briefly alluded to; they are very remarkable after it leaves the Lake of Galilee; at its exit it is about 100 feet broad, shallow, but very rapid. It winds about like the wreathings of a snake, as if reluctant to continue its course onward to the Sea of Death. On first leaving the lake, it runs to the northward, then west, south-west, and finally south, and all within a mile. It

[1] Elijah, long afterwards, divided the waters with his cloak just before going to heaven in the chariot of fire, and he and Elisha walked over. Elisha also, with the same cloak, parted the waters after Elijah was taken up to heaven.—See 2 Kings ii. 8—14.

afterwards 'makes a long détour to the east, and thus it continues meandering about in the most eccentric fashion, after darting along rocky rapids, or leaping down noisy cataracts, as if in sport, and stealing silently away in some new direction beneath overhanging willows and thick sycamores.'[1]

But to follow correctly its windings and doublings, a reference should be made to Captain Tynon's map. It would be very difficult to describe the Jordan correctly; its appearance is so changeable, varying with the times of year, and this must be the reason why writers so differ; they must simply have seen it at different seasons of the year. When we saw it, at the bathing place it was narrow, deep, and muddy, and the stream very rapid; the banks on the opposite side were low and covered with weeds, so that when it overflows its banks it would be of considerable breadth, and more like a river than the stream we bathed in. Now, what with our cogitations, and perhaps now and then a little dozing, the hour has slipped away, and we must prepare to move from the Jordan. It is sweet to lie here and ponder, and think of Him, the loving Saviour of mankind, and in imagination behold Him standing in that stream being baptised by St. John the Baptist. How vividly holy scenes present themselves while actually on the spots where they occurred. Bethabara — where is the Bethabara of the New Testament? Why this is Bethabara; it is here, and extends to the other side beyond Jordan, and this is my convincing argument—excuse me for using such positive language—to prove that this *must* have been the spot of our Lord's baptism. St. John says, ch. i. ver. 28, 'These things were done *in Bethabara* beyond Jordan, where John was baptising.' Now I suppose that on almost any map you may refer to, you will find Bethabara noted as the country on either side of the

[1] Thompson.

southernmost extremity of Jordan, a little north of the Dead Sea, and it is very plain to the traveller that there is no place in this small region of Bethabara where St. John could possibly have been baptising but at this spot. The meaning of the word Bethabara, or Beth-barah, as it is sometimes called in the Bible, is 'the place of passage.' Dr. Bannister gives it as a town on the east bank of Jordan, over against Jericho, but it seems to me to be more likely a district. It was to the ford here that Gideon sent messengers to secure the passage of the river previous to his fight with the Midianites. 'There all the men of Ephraim gathered themselves together and took the waters unto Beth-barah and Jordan' (Judges vii. 24). And it was on account of the convenient depth of water here that St. John selected this spot for baptising. To this place also our Lord Jesus retired when the Jews tried to take Him at the feast of Dedication. 'Therefore they sought again to take Him: but He escaped out of their hand, and went away again beyond Jordan into the place where John at first baptized; and there He abode' (John x. 39, 40).

St. John the Baptist of course is an authority to be relied on. It was he who 'saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove' when it rested upon our Lord as He came up out of the water, and it was to him that God spoke thus:—'Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on Him, the same is He which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost. And I saw, and bare record that this is the Son of God.' It was the next day that St. John saw our Lord coming, and he said, 'Behold the Lamb of God!'

This, then, without doubt, is the ground on which He walked, and this ford the spot where He stood and was baptized, and over our heads was where the heavens opened and the dove descended. Are we sufficiently thankful to God for His mercy in permitting us to visit all these holy places? Jordan, beloved and sacred river, farewell!

Would that I could rest on thy banks yet a little longer, but I must tear myself away as from a friend, but I shall never forget thee. Thy green, refreshing banks, thy cool, invigorating stream: all is and will be indelibly impressed upon my memory. One last glance at thy rushing waters, and again farewell!

CHAPTER VIII.

FROM JORDAN TO GILGAL AND ARRIVAL AT THE NIGHT'S-HALT AT JERICHO.

We left the Jordan and started for Jericho at 4.10 P.M., having had nearly two hours' halt on its banks, arriving as we did at 2.17 P.M. We had still before us a ride of about three hours, making a total of somewhat less than eight hours in the saddle during the day, through most of which we were exposed to a broiling sun. The heat on this sunken plain was still very great, and increased by the hot sand we rode over, we felt it severely. The plain is mostly flat, but sometimes gently undulating, and the utter desolation and barrenness of the Dead Sea region gradually gave way to, first scanty, and then luxuriant verdure. I suppose the cavalcade had not been half an hour under way before the bullying giant 'Thirst' stalked about amongst us. 'Have you got any water in your bottle?' was the oft-repeated question. 'Yes, but it's Jordan water.' All had a stock of Jordan water preserved in the tin bottles bought at Jerusalem: some also carried a supply of Dead Sea water. Well, so we rode on with nothing but Jordan and Dead Sea water in the company to assuage the ever-recurring thirst. Silence and thought prevailed for a time; then the tyrant had it all his own way; bottle after bottle was raised to the lips, and by-and-by drained. Many

doubtless were willing to suffer greatly before sacrificing their much-prized Jordan water, but the ride was a truly hot and thirsty one. The elder ones, of course, could endure more, and would not apply to the Jordan bottles for relief; but nevertheless the sacred water during the ride considerably decreased, and what ultimately reached the ship, and is being conveyed home to England, I cannot say. All I know is that my own little bottle is safe and sound. My 'Jordan bottle' came to grief, for finding a leak in it at Santa Saba, I left it behind there, but I had brought with me a metal flask in case of accidents, which could bear knocking about without being damaged. At 5.30 P.M., the sun getting low, the air cooled, and the ground over which we passed was moderately hard and good. One or two sharp gallops were indulged in; this put us considerably ahead of the rear, and as some of the horses were now breaking down, it was difficult to get them on at all. In the course of another hour there were two or three 'break-downs;' this caused much delay; but of course we had to halt to see what was the matter. One or two of the midshipmen trudging along on foot proved the truth of the matter, that 'My horse has broken down.' On occasions like these I can't say how the dragoman managed, for there were no spare horses in the company that I ever saw, and during the course of our several days' ride I repeatedly trotted my horse from one end of the cavalcade to the other, and I never saw a single one. Truly, many of us would not meet each other for the whole day, and it was difficult to say for a certainty who or what was in the concourse. However, the dragoman found remounts on this occasion; two were on one horse, but nobody had to walk. I was very glad when we moved on, for in spite of the hot and hard day's ride from Santa Saba, I could not hold in or control my steed, and to do so I was obliged to dismount.

The ground we had passed over was the same through which the Israelitish army had marched after crossing the river Jordan, and we now approached the site of their encampment, which was pointed out on our left about one mile from ancient Jericho; and this would agree with Josephus' statement, that Joshua pitched his camp fifty furlongs from the river, and ten from Jericho. A small dirty Arab village of mud huts called Riha, it seems probable was the site of this encampment. We rode through in straggling detachments by fall of eve. From the limited view we had of the scenery here, one could almost fancy he was riding along some broken country road in old England, with hedges and trees and crops of grain on either hand. We passed just at this place a small party of Europeans encamped, ladies were amongst the party. They were sitting outside their tent apparently after some meal, dinner or tea possibly; they looked so cosy and comfortable, enjoying the cool still evening air, while perhaps they talked over adventures past and adventures to come. I did so envy the snug restful look of this little party encamped at Gilgal—but we had one more weary mile to go, and not an easy mile either. It was getting dark and some eight or ten of us had become detached from the main party ahead. We lost sight of them and also of those behind. We felt a little apprehension of losing our way on these plains of Jericho. Some thought they had seen the encampment on ahead, but it became lost to view, and we had to walk our horses gingerly along a narrow pathway in single file, trusting to fortune for being in the right direction. We proceeded as fast as we could and that was slowly enough; however, after some time a file of white heads was sighted on in front, so our anxiety soon vanished, and with it the visionary picture of our having to remain in the open air all night, supperless or rather dinnerless. So now that our minds are at ease, let us occupy a few minutes in considering

the spot over which we are riding. Dr. Thompson says, 'there probably never was any permanent *city* called Gilgal in this plain; and if there was, it had passed away, and the name and site were lost even before Josephus wrote his history.' It was here at Gilgal that the ordinance of circumcision was ordered to be renewed, for during the forty years' sojourn of the Israelites in the desert it had been discontinued. But now 'The Lord said unto Joshua, This day have I rolled away the reproach of Egypt from off you. Wherefore the name of the place is called Gilgal unto this day.' The meaning of the word Gilgal is 'Rolling.' 'And the children of Israel encamped in Gilgal, and kept the passover on the fourteenth day of the month at even in the plains of Jericho (Josh. v. 9, 10). It was here that the supply of manna from heaven ceased. The people eat of the corn of the country, and next morning they missed the supply of heavenly food which had so regularly been sent for their sustenance for so many years, but now that there was other provision, it ceased at once. The site of Joshua's monument which he set up in remembrance of the miracle of the dividing of Jordan, is, I believe, lost. I am alluding to the twelve stones taken out of the river by a man of each tribe. Dr. Bannister says, 'These stones (as the name of the place denotes) were probably ranged in a circle, similar to the Druidical circles of the ancient Britons, which may thus be traced up to the patriarchal age and the immemorial usage of the East.' The place where Joshua met the man with a drawn sword in his hand, who turned out to be an angel and captain of the host of the Lord, I suppose, was a little nearer to Jericho than we have at present reached. The scene of Agag's death must not be forgotten, for it took place here some 350 years afterwards, whom Saul had wickedly spared, together with some of the spoil of the Amalekites, when ordered to utterly destroy everything. The famous words of Samuel

will be remembered in answer to Saul's wicked lie, 'What meaneth then this bleating of the sheep in mine ears, and the lowing of the oxen which I hear?' One lie requires another, and Saul replied with a lie. Samuel by and by answers, 'Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams. Because thou hast rejected the word of the Lord, He hath also rejected thee from being king.' Consequently Saul was both made and unmade king by Samuel at Gilgal. Samuel then ordered Agag the king of the Amalekites to be brought, and he said to him, 'As thy sword hath made women childless, so shall thy mother be childless among women. And Samuel hewed Agag in pieces before the Lord in Gilgal' (1 Sam. xv.). It will also, perhaps, be remembered that it was at Gilgal that Elisha healed the deadly pottage, the story of which is contained in 2 Kings iv. 38–44. Thus, then, you see there is much to occupy our thoughts riding along here through Gilgal, but during the time our thoughts have been carrying us back into past ages, our horses have carried us bodily forward through Gilgal and close to Jericho; but look out! what's this? why, it's a running, bubbling stream and right across our path. Well, as there is no bridge, the best thing we can do is to trust to our horses; it's too dark to judge of its depth, but depend upon it they won't attempt to ford if it's too deep; so then, I've given the rein to my horse, and he is carefully picking his way across. This is Elisha's stream, so called because he healed its waters of their former bitterness with a cruse of salt. Elisha was staying at Jericho after Elijah had been taken up by a fiery chariot to heaven, and when the fifty men who had been searching for him, thinking that peradventure he had only been taken up into a mountain, returned and found him not; it was then 'the men of the city said unto Elisha, Behold, I pray thee, the situation of this city is pleasant, as my lord seeth: but the water is naught, and

the ground barren. And he said, Bring me a new cruse, and put salt therein. And they brought it to him. And he went forth unto the spring of the waters, and cast the salt in there, and said, Thus saith the Lord, I have healed these waters; there shall not be from thenceforth any death or barren land. So the waters were healed unto this day, according to the saying of Elisha which he spake.'

It was through this fountain of sweet waters that our horses now waded. Elisha's fountain is also called 'Ain-es-Sultan'—Fountain of the Sultan. It is a most deliciously clear, refreshing brook, as we learnt next morning, and truly, from thence, there is no 'more death or barren land,' for its banks are lined with trees and luxuriant verdure, and all around smiled with fertility. But the darkness of night had set in and nothing of this could we now see. We have reached the borders of our encampment—and, indeed, what better place could have been chosen than the banks of this beautiful little stream? Lights were flitting about among the tents, and the scene, although mostly shrouded in darkness, was busy and cheerful as well as grateful to us 'toil worn travellers.' But as the last of our detached party, of about six or eight, has not yet waded across the stream, I will repeat an amusing little incident which occurred here to one of the stragglers coming up behind. They were, as we had been, riding along single file, when a branch of a tree close to the stream hooked off one of the midshipmen's straw hats, which remained hanging in the tree, so he called out to those behind to bring it on for him. Not far in the rear was the French instructor, a Frenchman, mounted on a mule, having resigned his horse for a softer and broader seat than the usual saddle—as he, together with several others, suffered considerably from the continuous riding. Well, as has been remarked, the mules were most willing to go, when others around were on the move, but were most unwilling to stop. As

Monsieur rode under the tree he managed to snatch away the hat, but his own was caught, and in trying to regain it, his coat became hooked, and he became unhorsed or rather unmuled; however, he soon now got his hat, but to add to the chapter of accidents, his mule, caring nothing for being minus its rider, continued steadily to pursue its way and crossed the stream. Oh, what was Monsieur to do? how could he get across? Well, there was no help for it, so in he went and waded through the water. So, poor fellow, in this one instance good nature was not rewarded, although he was none the worse afterwards for the ducking.

Here we are arrived at the encampment at Jericho. We almost felt inclined to give three cheers, so glad were we; well, 'Off you jump,' and off we did jump from our saddles, far otherwise than sorry to fling the bridles to the attendant grooms.

CHAPTER IX.

ENCAMPED AT JERICHO.

Perhaps more than one of us during our life-time had been wished 'at Jericho'—and here we were on the very spot. This was to be my first night under canvas, first and last. More than nine years had elapsed since last I slept in a tent, and that was under very different circumstances—it was on the east coast of Africa in the borders of the jungle, and my ship lay a wreck on the rocks about two miles from the shore. The present, then, was far preferable to the past. We had certainly plenty of robbers in our neighbourhood, but with the guard and our own means of protection, of course they scarcely deserved a thought. A considerable time elapsed before we found the tent allotted to us. We looked in this tent, we looked in that, but all

were generally pretty full of midshipmen. The arrangement of the Jericho encampment was somewhat different to what it had been at Jerusalem; the large saloon or dining tent was in the centre, with the sleeping tents all round; consequently, even after one's tent was found, on leaving it and wishing again to return, it was no easy matter to find; for arriving as we had by night, no land mark or other sign could be fixed upon as a guide through the general maze of tents.

It was 7 o'clock when we arrived, and it must have been much after that by the time all stragglers and 'break-downs' got in; but they all did get in, some time or other, safe and sound.

What a relief it always was to come to the end of a long journey, with the prospect of a good meal and a sound night's rest before us! After considerable peregrination our tent was found, but it contained no bed for me; however, this was soon remedied, an iron bedstead was brought and made ready long before retiring time came. The baggage mules had preceded us, so that our carpet bags and portmanteaus were already to hand.

After a general washing and brushing of hair our steps were bent towards the centre of attraction, viz., the dining saloon. Everything here was the same as at Jerusalem, and it seemed like a ship that had simply moved her anchorage from one port to another, or as if a magician had been at work and transported our grand eating-place from the Valley of Gihon to the plains of Jericho. We all sat down, grace was said, and we 'set to.' No fault, I am sure, could be found with either the attendance or the fare, for both were excellent. It must be remembered that our party consisted of from eighty to ninety persons at table. And here we were, this large number sitting down to dinner, over the site of ancient Jericho, far away from anything like civilisation, with the exception, begging its par-

don, of the small camp at Riha, a mile or so distant; but still everything was served up hot, and all was so good that one could hardly wish for better in one's 'Father's own halls.' Nice savoury soup opened the bill of fare, followed by so many entrées and other dishes that I am really quite at a loss to enumerate them for want of memory; then came 'the sweets,' delicious and rich, and the dessert following brought our sumptuous repast to an end. The wines we had ourselves supplied, so that there was literally nothing wanting and nothing for the most fastidious to complain of, unless it was the incompleteness of cleaning the plates, which possibly had to be done somewhat hurriedly, so that a sly passing of one's table napkin over one's plate was not amiss before using it.

Nobody seemed very fatigued, certainly not enough to cause loss of appetite; those who had been a little indisposed appeared to have pretty well recovered now, and good appetites were all 'the go,' as well as good spirits. We dined at eight o'clock, and while sitting over our wine an Arab dance was announced as about to take place, and would we like to see it? Oh, yes! we didn't want to lose any of the sights; we would be out directly. I was disappointed with the performance; it is simply farce to call it a dance, for there was no dancing in the business. I had seen very far better antics gone through by niggers on the other side of the continent of Africa; but the present seemed to me both tame and stupid, although I own it may possibly be my ignorance in not understanding the performance. A circle was formed, about half of which, or somewhat less, was occupied by a semi-circle of Arabs, who kept time to a monotonous kind of chant with the clapping of hands and bending forward of their bodies, while the Arab chief walked about in the midst close to them flourishing a drawn sword, and every now and then uttering a kind of guttural

rattling shriek or whistle. I did not remain there very long, not feeling sufficiently interested, but I think this was all that comprised the entire Arab dance. Bacsheesh, as a matter of course, was asked, and not content with that the sheikh came round afterwards to our tents for more remuneration. This Arab captain, I understand, was far otherwise than a poor man, but even a trifle would be always thankfully received. He introduced himself at our tent doors with the words 'Good night,' in English, the only words in our language I suppose he was master of, but in spite of his fluency with them I fear he got far more snubs than coppers, as few or none cared to give a double subscription. After the dance all began to settle down into quiet, and many retired to rest. In walking across the encampment to the saloon tent I observed a prowling dog here and there, sneaking about to see what he could pick up; they were wolfish or jackal looking creatures, but seemed perfectly harmless and kept out of the way. I had some difficulty before seeking my couch in committing to paper the usual short epitome of the day's doings for my home letters, and only managed a few lines before discovering it was 11 P.M., and as we had again to be mounted at an early hour in the morning I thought it advisable at once to 'shut up' and seek my couch.

The night was very hot and oppressive, and some proposed leaving the tent door open; but then came the question, how about robbers? Certainly we had a guard, but our tent being one of the outermost would it not be easy for some skulking thief or other to enter in the dead of night? The individual nearest the door had his things all nicely arranged along a line overhead, with his unmentionables most conveniently placed by the outlet should any light-fingered Arab gentleman happen to be passing that way. What a fright this brother companion of ours

was in when the probabilities of such a thing happening was mentioned, and how he jumped out of bed to secure his unmentionables! About this moment the second dragoman 'appeared on the scene,' as they say in books, and comforted us by saying, that if anything were lost all we had to do was to put our own price on the things and the guard were forced to give compensation. However, as possibly the guard had not among them a surplus pair of trousers, it might be doubtful whether one would be able to obtain sufficient compensation for riding all the way from Jericho to Jerusalem in the cool and airy costume of only coat and shirt tails. So after all there was nothing equal to 'locking the door before the horse was stolen;' therefore, although we agreed to keep the tent curtain back, the useful articles of wearing apparel alluded to, as well as all others, were put out of the way of temptation to anybody who *might* happen to pass that way. Talking about horses, by-the-by, we were disturbed once or twice by a violent wrenching at a tent string and pin outside, making the tent pole bend again and seeming very likely to bring down the whole affair about our ears; on going out in our night attire to ascertain the cause of all this commotion a horse is observed entangled amongst the tent strings, doing his best to free himself from the meshes, but at the same time hardly going about it in the right manner, seeming to think the best way was to push on and break down all barriers. He was put in the right direction and left to look after himself. As it was now nearly midnight, and we had had a long weary day from Mar Saba to the Dead Sea, Jordan, and here to Jericho, and were to be on the move again early in the morning, to seek repose was very necessary. The humming and chirping of insects made a fine chorus all around, with the occasional cry of a jackal, and the croaking of the frogs in the brook; added to which, there was a 'click, click, click,' going on imme-

diately outside our tent all night. It turned out to be some kind of grooming being performed. However, I had from four to five hours' sound sleep and was 'all about' betimes in the morning.

The early morning was truly lovely; the air was pleasant, but just a trifle beyond a little warm, to be very exact: the sky was a deep azure, without a cloud to mar its perfect beauty; hills and mountains rose before us, but the encampment itself was spread out on the green pretty plain, with the clear refreshing stream, 'Ain-es-Sultan, rushing along its borders. Here we were, near about the very centre of where the ancient city of Jericho once stood, but little or nothing remained to mark its past glory. Certainly close by stood a few old ruins, but I think it doubtful whether they had ever formed a portion of the city. Suffice it to say, all around our temporary abode beauty and smiling verdure reigned. At least it was such to my eye, and let it be recollected that we were here in the month of April, about the very best month in the whole year, for come again two or three months later and perhaps you will behold a very different scene, when all will be scorched up, withered and dead, sterile, barren, and desolate, for the rays of the sun pour no common heat upon these plains more than a thousand feet below the level of the sea, shut in by high mountains, and exposed to the sulphurous vapours of the Lake of Death and the surrounding accursed region. Let those, I pray, who have visited the plains of Jericho in the mid summer, not think I am drawing the long bow by the description I have given. I trust and think I am not doing so, for at all times I endeavour to prevent myself from being carried away by feeling, and so unwittingly deceive. What a strange thing it seemed being so many hundreds of feet below the sea, and as you looked up at the mountains to think that our gallant old ship was as high above our heads as some of those peaks.

Close to the encampment rose a hill standing by itself on the plain; upon its summit gently waved in the morning air the Union Jack, adding much to the generally imposing aspect of the encampment. As usual I think I beat most in early rising, and washed and dressed, wishing to make the best of the golden minutes before breakfast, of seeing the ruins and taking a little tour about the exterior of the encampment. The scene at Elisha's fountain was a merry and lively one. Numbers of the midshipmen, as well as the other officers, were bathing in its clear limpid stream, shut in mostly by the luxuriant herbage which shaded its banks on either side; trees spreading their branches completely across kept away the sun's rays, which already, at this early hour, were very warm. A better natural bath could hardly be, and the enjoyment of those making use of it was very great. In some of the tents midshipmen were *considerably less* than half dressed—I think that a polite way of putting it—poor young fellows; some had been terribly bitten by insects during the night, so that not over much sleep could have visited their eyes. I fortunately had made free use of my insect powder, so passed the night scathless. One or two suffered so much that, on returning to the ship, they were put on the 'sick list,' for the bites turned to ulcers. On issuing from the camp I bent my steps to the hill already mentioned, to enjoy a full view of the plains of Jericho. I had some little time to indulge in solitude and thought alone with my dear old Bible, before breakfast. Oh, surely there is a very great advantage in early rising—imperfect as my health has been for some years past I have yet found it to be greatly so as regards myself. The quiet of a summer's morning is so pure and holy, the placidness, the freshness of all around seems to breathe into one so many holy, heavenly thoughts and desires; it is then when innocence and purity are the reigning powers, giving one for this brief period, as it were, almost

a foretaste of that perfect purity we pine so much for and long to enjoy in the future heavenly rest, when the present seemingly endless struggle against impure thoughts and actions and wicked deeds will be at an end; all will then be peaceful rest and perfect joy.

On this occasion I cannot say the air was either very cool or refreshing, for by 7 A.M. the sun was actually hot, and high in the heavens; but I enjoyed that ramble before breakfast. The climb up the hill was melting work; however, I had a fine view from its summit of Gilgal and the plains of Jericho; but little or nothing could be seen of Elisha's fountain, it was so enclosed with overhanging trees. The view is so enjoyable that I must be excused if I ponder over it for a while. How cosy and snug our little canvas town looks down there, occupying a small portion of the site of the once great city of Jericho, which in long centuries ago reared its proud mansions on this plain! All have passed away, and nothing but a few miserable ruins remain to tell the tale of their past glory, and they are the monuments of an avenging Deity.

The plains of Jericho are said to be 1,300 feet below the level of the sea, and from this peculiarity it must be that they have the climate of the tropics. I have read that these plains contain 200,000 acres, but even from the elevated position on which I stand it would be quite impossible to even guess at an estimate. The meaning of the word Jericho is 'City of Palm Trees,' but not a single one can I see. Dr. Thompson says that when he was here twenty-three years ago, he saw one solitary palm still standing, but now even that has disappeared; so the thick groves of palm trees after which the city was named, with it, have been blotted out. On the west of the plain rises a high mountain, called Quarantania; this is the traditionary mountain of temptation to which Satan led our Saviour to show him the glories of the world, and here it is said our

dear Lord fasted forty days. Barley harvest down here is considered to begin April 1, but it must be late this year, for here we are past the middle of the month, and I have observed no crops cut. The scene before us is that of the first success of the Israelites after passing the Jordan. As they approached, the massive gates of Jericho were closed, so that 'none went out, and none came in.' But the Lord told Joshua that the city was delivered to him, so it was very evident a miracle must be performed, for how otherwise were such powerful walls as surrounded the city to be passed. The Lord tells Joshua how it shall be accomplished; so Joshua rises early in the morning, and 'the priests take up the ark of the Lord.' Seven priests carry trumpets before the ark and sound them. In front go armed men. They thus go round the city every day, once for six days. On the seventh day they encompass it seven times. How the people inside the city must have wondered at the cause of all this, little thinking how soon they were to be delivered over to destruction. It was on the seventh time that Joshua bid the people shout, and told them that the city should be cursed. 'So the people shouted when the priests blew with the trumpets: and it came to pass, when the people heard the sound of the trumpet, and the people shouted with a great shout, that the wall fell down flat, so that the people went up into the city, every man straight before him, and they took the city.' Then followed a fearful destruction; man, woman, and child, young and old; ox, sheep, and ass—all were destroyed; all are slaughtered with the exception of Rahab, and she only is saved. The city itself was burnt, but the precious metals found were preserved for the House of the Lord. After the destruction is complete, Joshua utters the curse. 'Cursed be the man before the Lord, that riseth up and buildeth this city Jericho: *he shall lay the foundation thereof in his first-born, and in his youngest son shall he set*

up the gates of it' (Josh. vi.). This curse and prophecy were literally accomplished 534 years after, when Ahab was king of Israel, for we read in 1 Kings xvi. 34: 'In his days did Hiel the Bethelite build Jericho: *he laid the foundation thereof in Abiram his first-born, and set up the gates thereof in his youngest son Segub*, according to the word of the Lord, which he spake by Joshua the son of Nun.'

There is, I am well aware, a doubt as to the *exact* site of Jericho, but I think it can hardly be very much doubted that it was situated here, for what otherwise can be the ruins in the neighbourhood—the fallen columns, the old foundations of walls that have been traced, &c.? In my humble opinion, I cannot see much doubt about it. 'And Jesus entered and passed through Jericho.' It was over yonder where Zaccheus was said to have climbed into a sycamore tree in order that he might the better see Jesus as He passed by that way. 'And when Jesus came to the place, he looked up, and saw him, and said unto him, Zaccheus, make haste, and come down; for to-day I must abide at thy house. And he made haste, and came down, and received him joyfully.' It was here that Jesus spoke the parable of the ten pieces of money, and, when he had spoken, 'he went before, ascending up to Jerusalem.' From Bethphage he rides in triumph into Jerusalem, and it is on this road, when He beheld the city, He wept over it. To-day we are to travel that very journey, and by the same road. Some have an idea that Riha is the site of Jericho, but there is nothing whatever to back the opinion—no ruins or ancient remains. The village itself consists of forty or fifty huts, inhabited by Mohammedan robbers.

That these plains of Jericho are subject to great changes, according to the season of the year, I will show by quoting from Rae Wilson, who must have been here at a very

different month to the present. 'No language of the most eloquent writer can give a proper description of the mournful devastation which reigns in this devoted region, or express that solemn horror the scene is so well calculated to inspire. This country must be visited in order to be believed to be, as it really is, strikingly monumental of the tremendous wrath of Almighty God, and held up as an everlasting warning to mankind. On the whole, the vast wilderness, the frightful sterility, and the strange apparitional forms of the moving sands, are sufficient, without any extravagant fiction or chimeras of imagination, to impress a beholder with the most profound sentiments of religious awe, and the power of an avenging Deity.' The scenery around, even at this present bright period of the year, *is* forbidding in its very boldness and sterility, and I can but agree with the words of Mr. Buckingham, who says the neighbourhood 'is held to be the most dangerous in Palestine; indeed, the very aspect of the scenery is sufficient, on the one hand, to tempt to robbery and murder, and, on the other hand, to occasion a dread of it in those who pass that way.' He speaks of the mountains and their defiles. But as far as the green plains were concerned, I cannot say, from their appearance, I was struck with any awe at all; but knowing there were many robbers about, I took care not to wander too far away by myself, although armed. Having sufficiently enjoyed the scenery, and thoughts it gave rise to, from the little hill-top, I descended to the ruins, a short distance further away.

A very short time after my inspection was over, and returning to the tents, I found breakfast just being announced, so I repaired forthwith to the saloon tent, feeling quite ready for the meal.

This breakfast must rank among many other things that have made an indelible impression upon my mind. I was

constantly feeling and repeating to myself, 'And this is Jericho—we are really in Jericho!' I felt quite a childish delight, and enjoyed so thoroughly feelings of this kind. Here I was in health and strength, having so far accomplished a journey I dreaded, but would not have foregone for worlds. I dreaded it, as I feared my strength would have failed during its fatigues, but I had borne them as well as the strongest.

We collected round the festive board at 7.20 A.M. By this time the heat of the day had commenced, and inside or outside the tent it was intensely hot; indeed, the heat was tropical. It is several years now since I was serving her Majesty in the tropics, but my recollection of the heat then was much the same as what we endured now. I perhaps was quite singular amongst the whole company, but the heat must be put down as one of my special enjoyments, for it was all part and parcel of Jericho and our breakfast on its plains. There was one rather amusing annoyance, and that was the swarms of flies, which were not only content to attack our food with their black masses, but they attacked our faces and hands also. However, on second consideration, I must really also note this as one of the enjoyments of 'The Breakfast at Jericho,' for what with the melting heat and their incessant tormenting, it was, if I may use the expression, 'uncommon fun.' To drive them from one's face and hands seemed to be just about lost time, but to resist the attempt was impossible, as, from the irritation, it seemed as if each one gave a little nibble. Now I am sure you will bear with me in the minutiæ of the pleasures of this breakfast, for it will be the only one, perhaps, we shall ever have in Jericho. Well, about the flies: it was not only one's own torments that were so enjoyable, but the watching of others' also. Some put quite a solemn face upon it, and didn't seem to appreciate it one bit, especially one of the officers who sat

opposite to me—a really good-natured, good-tempered man, but he certainly was *not thoroughly* enjoying himself, and the flies attacked him voraciously. His face streamed with perspiration, which no sooner had he removed, together with the flies, than it broke out again, and back came the flies with redoubled vigour. He twisted about on his chair, now turning this way, now that; but no relief came. Every way he looked, every way he turned, there were the flies ever ready to beset him, immediately he removed his handkerchief from his face. I couldn't help remarking laughingly to him—and I hope it was not unkind—'I wish I was enjoying myself as you are.' He looked up mildly and wonderingly from amidst his torments and tormentors, but made no reply; but seemed patiently to wish that he was anybody else but himself. To say that the flies were as thick as blackberries in autumn I fear would give but a very poor idea of their number. The sugar-basin was a very favourite resort of theirs; it was quite a business to get at the sugar through their crowds. The business of eating and driving them away at the same time was the chief fun, but this we afterwards managed by tying our faces up in handkerchiefs, only leaving a passage free to the mouth. And so we went on with this our very 'enjoyable' meal, and I made an excellent breakfast. Immediately the meal was over, preparations were made for breaking up the encampment; baggage was hastily collected, baggage mules packed, beds, &c., folded and rolled up, horses saddled and got ready by their several Arab grooms. How much some of us would have liked just one day's rest, and to have spent it in quiet contemplation and reading on these plains. It seemed a little hard that circumstances obliged us so to hurry from place to place; but our orders were imperative, leave expired the following evening, and the ship was to go to sea shortly after our return on board. I am sure there were several of

the poor horses that would have delighted in a day's rest as much as ourselves, but still it could not be.

About 8 A.M. we sprung into our saddles, and the commander sounded 'the assembly' on his ship's fog horn. Some fifteen minutes more we marched out of the encampment, bade adieu to Jericho, and filed away in our usual long straggling style across the Plains.

CHAPTER X.

FROM JERICHO TO JERUSALEM.

SEVERAL of the horses were much jaded and worn from the previous days' rides. One poor animal managed only to reach the camp and died during the night. I had observed his body early in the morning not far from my tent, but did not take particular notice, thinking the poor thing was resting, but he was dead.

One or two mares in our company were followed by their foals during most of the journeyings. One poor little creature who had trotted merrily along for many a mile got very tired, but the midshipman who rode the mare took compassion on it, dismounted and hoisted it up in front of him. The picture was a ludicrous one, the long legs of the animal swinging about on either side, and its head nodding and shaking as its mother stepped along over the stones, with the midshipman hanging on to it to prevent its falling off. For about three-quarters of an hour, or perhaps somewhat less, we rode along the plains through clumps of bushes on either side. It was here that the sharp eye of the Bishop of Gibraltar discerned the supposed to be Apple of Sodom, and pointed out the same to me, a small, bright yellow fruit as before observed.

Immediately we commenced ascending the road, if I may so term the broken and rocky pass leading up to Jerusalem, vegetation and verdure entirely ceased. This road is considered to be the most dangerous in Palestine; and if ever there were a place well suited to robbers and banditti this is the one. Numberless instances are given of parties falling among thieves here. It was in this neighbourhood that Mr. Bartlett mentions meeting a caravan of peasants, one of whom was severely wounded by the Bedawins, and was propped up on the back of a camel; appropriate indeed was this for the scene of the parable of the good Samaritan, and from that day to this, these wild passes and rocky pathways have never lost their character for insecurity, and indeed by-and-by I shall have to mention an attack that was made upon our own baggage, but that is a little farther on. Some portions of the roadway were very precipitous and slippery. When Dr. Thompson came this way, he came from Jerusalem '*down* to Jericho.' 'And,' he says, 'sure enough, *down*, *down* we did go, over slippery rocks, for more than a mile, when the path became less precipitous. Still, however, the road follows the dry channel of a brook for several miles further, as if descending into the very bowels of the earth. How admirably calculated for "robbers."' He afterwards mentions an instance of an English traveller having been attacked, shot, and robbed in one ot these defiles. Well, we were going 'up to Jerusalem,' which of the two I think is preferable to the descent.

I am always feeling during our eventful tour, 'I shall never forget' this or that, and here I have come again to another 'I shall never forget;' well I suppose I never shall do so, as far as these doleful passes, ravines, and precipices are concerned, but the nature of the scenery is difficult to describe, and in doing so I think I had better borrow from the pen of one who is far more equal to the

task than myself, simply remarking that I came fully prepared for what I saw from previous readings and study, but I did not find the precipices of quite so frightful a nature as I dreaded, and in my opinion nothing like those we passed over going to Mar Saba monastery. '*I shall never forget them.*'

'The whole road,' says Dr. Bannister, 'between Jerusalem and Jericho is through a series of rocky defiles, and on the edges of cliffs and precipices, which threaten destruction on the slightest false step.' The scenery around us is of the most bold and forbidding aspect; sometimes grand and awful, but that sort of grandeur which excites fear and terror, rather than admiration. 'This road,' says Mr. Buckingham, 'is held to be the most dangerous in Palestine; indeed, the very aspect of the scenery is sufficient on the one hand to tempt to robbery and murder, and on the other hand, to occasion a dread of it in those who pass that way. It made us feel most forcibly the propriety of its being chosen as the scene of the delightful tale of compassion which we had before so often admired for its doctrine, independent of its local beauty. One must be among these wild and gloomy solitudes, surrounded by an armed band, and feel the impatience of the traveller who rushes on to catch a new view at every pass and turn; one must be alarmed at the very tramp of the horses' hoofs resounding through the caverned rocks, and at the savage shouts of the footmen, scarcely less loud than the echoing thunder produced by the discharge of their pieces in the valleys; one must witness all this on the spot, before the full force and beauty of the admirable story of the good Samaritan can be perceived. Here, pillage, wounds, and death, would be accompanied with double terror, from the frightful aspect of all around. Here the unfeeling act of passing by a fellow-creature in distress, as the Priest and Levite are said to have done, strikes one

with horror, as an act almost more than inhuman. And here, too, the compassion of the good Samaritan is doubly virtuous, from the purity of the motive which must have led to it, in a spot where no eyes were fixed on him to draw forth the performance of any duty, and from the bravery which was necessary to admit of a man's exposing himself, by such delay, to the risk of a fall similar to that from which he was endeavouring to rescue his fellow-creature.'

Up, up, our horses clambered, higher and higher over the slippery, broken rocks. Here on the right is the bed of the famous brook Cherith, now nothing but a dry, rocky precipice. From appearances it must have been once a rushing torrent, running from these mountains down that deep ravine into the plains below, traversing them, and pouring itself into the Jordan north of Bethabara. Its bed, commencing high in the rocky mountains, faces the river Jordan miles away across the plain, and the hills of Moab beyond; and where the plains of Siddim were, now the Dead Sea stretches itself in sad, death-like stillness to the southward. The view from this lofty eyrie is awful and imposing; it includes so much of dreadful and fearful interest, and the silence and very stillness that reign around seem to speak such volumes of history—and history that can never be blotted from the memory of man as long as yonder sombre hills rear their lofty summits over that death-like sea, keeping watch and guard until the last great trump shall sound, and all things change. It was here, by this brook, or rather, I should say, rushing mountain torrent, that Elijah dwelt when he was fed by the ravens. Let us try and refer to our bibles while our horses continue to clamber upward. Elijah having prophesied against Ahab, the wicked King of Israel, to whom he said, 'As the Lord God of Israel liveth, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word;' then the Lord said to Elijah, 'Get thee hence, and turn

thee eastward, and hide thyself by the brook Cherith, that is before Jordan. And it shall be, that thou shalt drink of the brook; and I have commanded the ravens to feed thee there. So he went and did according unto the word of the Lord: for he went and dwelt by the brook Cherith, that is before Jordan. And the ravens brought him bread and flesh in the morning, and bread and flesh in the evening; and he drank of the brook.' How deeply interesting to us who even now are passing that self-same brook. The very wildness of the scene is just what one might imagine would be chosen for such a spot. The brook was now, as before mentioned, dried up, it may be 'because there had been no rain in the land,' and it was for this reason that the Lord said unto Elijah, 'Arise, get thee to Zarephath, which belongeth to Zidon, and dwell there: behold, I have commanded a widow woman there to sustain thee.' In a few days' time we shall be in our old ship, off the very spot mentioned, and I shall then hope to finish the story. This deep ravine of the brook Cherith, dividing the mountains, with large birds of prey hovering over, forms a picture such as one may see only once in his life. I will not follow minutely this journey of ours 'up to Jerusalem;' it was both tedious and monotonous. I think some idea may be formed of the scenery by what has been said, and will thus be brought back to our memories in years to come. There soon commenced to be much straggling and lagging behind, while toiling through and up the mountain passes; the rear came along very slowly, and it became evident that there would be breaks down before reaching Jerusalem. Twice we halted, but a considerable time elapsed before all those in the rear came up on their jaded horses. The second halt was at an old ruin, said to be the khan or inn alluded to by our Saviour in the parable of the Good Samaritan. The remains were of a massive structure, evidently of great age, and I should think very probably

formed a building of the kind once. For between Jerusalem and Jericho, where so many caravans and travellers must have passed to and fro when Jericho was a city, such a place would be much required by the way. And as our Lord had journeyed by this same road we now traversed, He must have observed this house, and hence perhaps He alluded to it in His parable as the inn to which the good Samaritan took the poor wounded man who had fallen among thieves on this road. We halted here for about twenty minutes. Our old Jordan friend had arrived before us—'the gentleman from Jerusalem,' with lemonade and oranges. I am sure his forethought and attention to the supply of our thirsty wants merit much praise, but the only thing to mar this was the 'fancy' prices he thought advisable to ask. Therefore I contented myself with an orange, and there was a well in the ruined inn that supplied those with water who cared not to go in for the expensive luxury of lemonade away here in the wilderness between Jericho and Jerusalem.

Soon after the last of the stragglers came riding up on their woebegone steeds, we again placed ourselves in the saddle, and rode forward towards the 'lunching halt,' some few miles further on. The road here became much better; there was some verdure to relieve the eye which had been long dazzled with the glare of white rocks. We, in front, moved gaily on, with our midday meal in prospect; four or five hours on horseback seem seldom to fail in giving one an appetite, and not a small one either. Our calvacade might well be compared to a piece of very elastic india-rubber. The start was always together in a body, which mile after mile caused to become more and more elongated, until what with stragglers, muleteers, foot guards, and other camp followers, one who waited to see the procession pass by would think the last horse was never coming. This was now as bad, indeed worse, than it had been yet.

Of course one had no means of seeing the whole length of the troop, but the tail would often be seen far away winding over the summit of a hill; and when we felt convinced that that must be the last, still horse after horse appears on the brow of the hill, and behind them are solitary horsemen riding in ones and twos, the rear of all, perhaps, brought up by an armed mounted guide and two guards on foot. Often did it appear to me how necessary it was that we should have had a large and numerous guard, otherwise there can be but little doubt that perhaps not a few would have been cut off by robbers.

I will now briefly relate how nearly we lost our baggage-mules, with all our baggage. The muleteers, who for a long time had kept up with the party, had dropped behind, and were travelling along alone; fortunately some distance behind them, again, were three or four of our straggling party riding together. Suddenly (if I understood the story aright), three armed Bedawin Arabs 'appear upon the scene,' carrying rifles, or rather I suppose muskets, and make straight for the mules. Off go the muleteers, not making an attempt at a stand. The baggage is captured and, for a brief period, in possession of these Arab robbers. There was no doubt about it; it had actually fallen among these thieves, and on the very road noted for robbers in the time of our Saviour, and even to the present day. One Arab mounted one of the mules, while the others were driving the remainder away; but their spoil was not secured. The officers behind came riding up, and the robbers 'skedaddled' very soon, making themselves scarce; fortunately no firearms were used or necessary, as not the slightest resistance was even pretended, otherwise it is likely it would have gone badly with the thieves, as their old flint-locks would have been but poor opponents to the Dean and Adams' revolver. The guide or rather second dragoman gave chase and slashed at these robbers with his

whip but they got clear off. Further on, and actually in the calvacade, two robbers were successful in a petty robbery. I do not quite remember the minutiæ of the case, but it seems that something went wrong with two of the horses, a saddle girth getting adrift, or something of that kind, when these two rascals offered their services, one walked off with a purse and the other with a knife; both the thieves were captured. I must have lost my own clasp-knife in the same way; and, if I am not mistaken, it was stolen by one of the guard to whom I lent it to cut a piece of cord, or something of that description, attached to my horse, while he assisted me in making the bridle secure. But this I do not give as a statement, as I cannot actually remember how or where I lost the knife; but this is certain, that all Arabs are robbers; therefore it is saying nothing detrimental to the character of our guard to accuse them of robbery; the only thing is, it doesn't pay the guard to rob, and therefore, generally speaking, they don't do so. We in the van galloped up to the lunching-place at about 2 P.M., having been little short of six hours from Jericho. This was doubtless slow as well as very fatiguing work, and the climb up through the mountain defiles and narrow passes had been no joke; and then, too, the numbers of stragglers held us back very much, otherwise we, who were well mounted, could have performed the journey much quicker.

As is usual on such occasions, the halt was by a well, and, after our hot ride, both our horses and selves needed refreshment; and we allowed them to drink their fill before the main body came up crowding round the well. It is while travelling through such desert regions as the wilderness of Judæa, that we learn to value a draught of water; as, riding exposed to the scorching rays of an unclouded sun, we suffer such a parching thirst, and rarely see either well, fountain, or running brook, at which to allay that thirst:

while enduring this, and moving slowly onward, one can well understand, why, in bygone times, the possession of a 'well of water' was a thing to be striven for (Gen. xxvi. 15–33); and why reservoirs or 'pools' and aqueducts were constructed with so much care, that they have outlasted most other monuments of great antiquity; one can also imagine that a well, or fountain, may have frequently determined the site for founding a city.

A good substantial lunch was prepared in a ruin up the slope facing the well; and pretty hungry most of us as usual were; for myself I can certainly answer. But we had to wait some time for the twos and threes that were continually coming in, and some of the party seemed lost altogether. The two thieves were brought in and pinioned by the Sheikh of the guard, and left thus bound at the further end of the ruin. Almost despairing of the arrival of the remainder of our party, we could wait no longer, so took our seats on the rugs, and things spread out for us, and went to work with a will. This meal must rank as one of the heartiest I have made in my life: I felt the truth of the saying, that there is no sauce equal to a good appetite, and *that* I, with apparently everybody else, possessed. After we had been thus deeply engaged for some time, the remainder of the party, consisting of the French instructor, the Hon. G——, &c., arrived; and it is to them that we are indebted for the rescuing of the baggage-mules which had been, it may be considered, already captured by Arabs. Lunch over and the usual supply of oranges finished, we turned our thoughts to the two captured robbers—what should we do with them? The midshipmen wanted to give them 'a good belting' and let them go, but were I expect considerably disappointed in not being permitted to administer a punishment the two Arab thieves would not easily have forgotten. Our staff surgeon, who is ever fond of 'his little joke,' determined to have a

piece of amusement at their expense. He looked at them and looked at us; then pretended to hold a solemn consultation as to how they should be disposed of; not one word, of course, could they understand, but looked very anxious as to the result, which the doctor seemed now suddenly to have arrived at. Waving back in a determined and solemn manner the crowd of midshipmen and officers, who dividing formed two separate lines, and an avenue down the centre, with the thieves at the further end and a dead wall cutting off all possible retreat, he advanced towards me and borrowed my pistol, taking it in his hand and examining it, the two wretches in the meanwhile being in a fearful state of trepidation, the sweat streaming down their dark forbidding visages. Dr.—— then fell back, pistol in hand, spoke a few words to the officers near, levelled, and took aim. It was really as good as a play to see the two rascals dancing about, one struggling to get behind and keep behind the other. Apparently, for some reason, the doctor lowered his hand, and another pretended consultation was gone through. The state of intense fear of the Arabs must be left to imagination; the workings of their wicked faces would have been the delight of many an artist. After the second consultation, the same performances were gone through, ending at last with the apparent determination of not shooting them. Observing they were reprieved, one of them rushed towards the doctor, and falling down, seized his hand and kissed it, going through all sorts of gesticulations and pointing upwards. This was all the punishment we administered; their bonds were then unfastened, and they were allowed to go free, for what else could we do with them?

The name of the well where we lunched I am uncertain about, but believe the dragoman called it the well of Joshua, but why so designated nobody seemed to be aware, not even our dragoman. The real name of the well

I am inclined to believe is the fountain of the apostles, for tradition tells us that those holy men were wont to stop there and refresh themselves when journeying from Jerusalem to Jericho; and the story seems a very probable one, as the fountain is close to the road side and most inviting to the thirsty traveller. From its appearance one would believe it to be very ancient, and doubtless it was there when our Saviour passed along this self-same road on his way up to Jerusalem from Jericho. Our halt lasted about one hour, and we started at 2·40 P.M. An exceedingly stiff piece of rocky, unbroken ground lay behind the well; this our horses had to climb. Two or three of the animals broke down here, and could not be moved a foot. I observed two of the midshipmen walking, the Hon. G.—— and Mr.—— somebody else; but, fortunately, we were now less than four miles from the Holy City, Jerusalem; but even that distance, after the former fatigue and under a baking sun along an exceedingly rocky and broken road, was no easy matter. However, on they went, seeming to think it quite a joke leaving their completely done-up steeds behind. We are now approaching one of the most interesting and holy spots in the world, and we cannot but help having a peculiar feeling that we are doing so. It is Bethany. What a rush of thoughts crowd the brain at the very mention of that one holy word, the name of that sweet little village. Rocky hills, dread precipices, and awful mountain passes, have been traversed and left behind: the scenery has changed, and the eye can once more delight itself in roaming amongst olive-trees, fig-trees, and other verdure. The Mount of Olives becomes in sight, dotted over with ancient olive-trees; and there, too, is the hill of Offence. There, on the right, is Bethany. In devout respect to Him who often sanctified the place with His presence, we, as usual on such occasions, uncover our head and breathe a thanksgiving to Him for His mercies to us, and ride silently forward and through the old

broken streets of Bethany, for a brief period reining in our horses close to the house pointed out as that of Martha and Mary.

Bethany is a small and ruinous village, and, to judge from appearances, it never was large, for I observed no other ruins about besides those within the immediate bounds of the village, and one or two solitary buildings standing separate and by themselves. Its situation among the green corn-fields is very pleasant; it is seated on the south-eastern base of the Mount of Olives, and numbers of trees round about add much to the beauty of the little spot. The true loveliness of all was the certainty that our Redeemer and Lord often and often came here to this quiet little secluded village to enjoy brief repose from the world's turmoil, in the bosom of that small happy family who loved Him so much—of that family who lived in this very (now old and ruinous) house by which our horses are standing. I am sure my reader, whoever he may be, messmate or otherwise, will kindly excuse any disjointedness with which I write, but so many, deeply interesting incidents, in connection with this sweet and revered spot, crowd my brain, that I scarcely know how to pen them.

The word Bethany means 'House of Affliction.' This was *without doubt* the town of Martha and Mary and Lazarus; the scene of some of the most interesting and affecting events of our Lord's life. Our dear Saviour was 'a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief.' During His life, which was full of pain and care, He was never seen to smile; He repeatedly wept. See Him here now: He has been sent for in haste, for one of His friends has been taken ill unto death, so that He died before His Lord came, for Jesus purposely delayed His coming. 'Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus;' but still He remained where He was, namely, Bethabara by Jordan, for

two days, and after that He said to His disciples, 'Let us go into Judæa again.' They try to dissuade Him, for fear the Jews will repeat their attacks on Him; but He says to them, 'Our friend Lazarus sleepeth; but I go, that I may awake him out of sleep.' Jesus meant that he was dead, and afterwards said to 'them plainly, Lazarus is dead.' This is such an interesting story that, well-known though it is, I must repeat it. St. Thomas proposes that he and his fellow-disciples shall also go with Jesus to meet the danger He intends to brave, and, if necessary, die with Him; and so the little party travel up that same road we have been journeying along to-day. But by the time they reached Bethany, Lazarus had been dead some time, four days out of which he had lain in the grave. 'Now Bethany was nigh unto Jerusalem, about fifteen furlongs;' yes, that's the distance, just about two miles: consequently there were several of Martha and Mary's friends in the house, come from the Holy City to try and offer consolation for their severe loss. Directly Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she ran down that road we see turning to the right, up which we have just come, to meet Him, and says, it may be, in a sorrowful, loving way, mingled a little with reproach, 'Lord, if Thou hadst been here, my brother had not died. But I know, that even now, whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give it Thee.' Jesus tells her he shall rise again: 'Whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die.' All this time the Lord is standing still; He does not go into the town, but Martha runs in to tell her sister that Jesus has come. Several of their friends are with her as Martha whispers the joyful news; and when she gets up hastily, and follows Martha, they imagine she is going to the tomb of Lazarus to weep, and some of them follow her. What an affecting sight now follows! Poor Mary falls down at Jesus' feet, and says, weepingly, 'Lord, if Thou hadst been here, my brother had not died.' Our

dear, sweet, affectionate Saviour, when he sees her weeping and the Jews weeping, 'He groaned in the spirit, and was troubled,' and asked where Lazarus had been buried. 'Jesus wept.' 'Then said the Jews, Behold, how he loved him!' There were those present who knew of the miracles Jesus had done, and wondered why He had not prevented this death; but they could not see into the heart of Jesus, and knew not His wise designs. Jesus now approaches the grave, groaning in himself as He draws near. How this all tells us of His deep sympathy with our troubles. The grave was in a cave, and a stone closed the mouth. Jesus orders the stone to be taken away. It was then that Martha said Lazarus had been dead four days; and of course four days in a hot climate such as this was more than sufficient to cause the body to have commenced to decompose. But I must finish this wonderful story in the words of the holy apostle St. John: 'Then they took away the stone from the place where the dead was laid. And Jesus lifted up His eyes, and said, Father, I thank Thee that thou hast heard me. And I knew that Thou hearest me always: but because of the people which stand by I said it, that they may believe that Thou hast sent Me. And when He thus had spoken, He cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth. And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with graveclothes; and his face was bound about with a napkin. Jesus said unto them, Loose him, and let him go.' Such, then, is the wonderful and true story which was enacted here on this very spot where we sit our horses; and the Son of God was the Chief Actor. Is it possible that the relation of it and the hearing can thrill through others the same as it does through us, while we look around on the very scene where it happened?

We must ride on, for our companions are some distance ahead already. There was no pause made to allow us to see the traditionary tomb of Lazarus—and indeed it was

well so, for I understand the wretched cavern into which one has to descend by twenty-five slippery steps, can have no connection therewith. It was here where Jesus was with Lazarus, whom He had so lately called again to life, when the supper was prepared for Him at which Mary anointed His feet with the precious ointment and wiped them with her hair (John xii. 3). How the ride through this pastoral spot reminds one of Jesus and His disciples walking through the corn-fields and plucking the ears of corn—were these the fields? perhaps they were. And here at Bethany took place that greatest of all events, Our Lord's ascension, His return to His home in heaven. 'And He led them out as far as to Bethany, and He lifted up His hands, and blessed them. And it came to pass, while He blessed them, He was parted from them, and carried up into heaven.' Such is the end of the history of the life of the Son of God on this our earth—and here is where the event took place. Many of us have travelled much over the wide, wide world, but what journey can be equalled to the one that is now drawing towards its end? Thus we ride through scenes which call to mind the most glorious anticipations of the Christian. The village of Bethany now goes by the name El Azarieh, or Lazarus. His tomb is at the bottom of the descent, and not far from his and his sisters' house, and about a hundred yards off is another place said to be the house of Mary Magdalene.

Very shortly after leaving Bethany we came suddenly upon a place where there were numbers of fig trees; this was most suggestive to the mind that it must be where Bethphage once stood. We know from Holy Writ that Bethany and Bethphage were close together, and 'nigh to Jerusalem,' and that the name signifies 'The place of figs.' Its site has been lost and cannot now be exactly determined, but there can be no doubt that that village once stood close here. So, then, this was the spot where Jesus sent

His disciples, saying, 'Go your way into the village over against you: and as soon as ye be entered into it, ye shall find a colt tied, whereon never man sat; loose him and bring him.' And it was down this same time-worn rocky road that our procession is now passing along; that His triumphal procession wended its way to Jerusalem. Yes, there can be no doubt about it, it was along this camel roadway that the Great King, the King of kings, meekly rode on the colt, the foal of an ass—along here people spread their garments for Him to pass over, while 'others cut down branches off the trees and strewed them in the way;' and the crowd that went before rent the air with their shouts of 'Hosanna; Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord: Blessed be the Kingdom of our father David, that cometh in the name of the Lord: Hosanna in the highest;' and so He entered into Jerusalem and into the temple. He must have made His entrance through the golden gate. When evening came He returned 'unto Bethany with the twelve.' It was on the following day when they had left Bethany and were again bound for Jerusalem that Jesus being an hungered, and seeing some distance off a fig-tree, He went up to it if haply there might be figs upon it. It was then he uttered those memorable words and said unto it, 'No man eat fruit of thee hereafter for ever. And His disciples heard it.' They then continued to wend their way to Jerusalem and entered the temple, and then it was Jesus turned out the money-changers and those that sold doves. They left the city again in the evening; and next morning, when they passed by where the fig tree was, they saw it withered and dried up from the roots—which of course must have struck the disciples with great wonderment, and to their remark of astonishment Jesus answered, 'Have faith in God.' So of course the miracle of the fig-tree was only performed as a lesson to them and to us. How deeply interesting is this our

present ride; well indeed may we journey on in silence, avoiding all conversation while our brain is so crowded with the many events that took place on this portion of the Mount of Olives. We left Bethany at about 3.30 P.M., reaching Jerusalem at 4 P.M., which at the pace we walked our horses makes the distance as nearly two miles as possible.

Our cavalcade, before coming in sight of the Holy City, collected most of their numbers together, and formed into somewhat of military array. In front of all rode a horseman bearing the unfurled standard, or rather British Union Jack. After him came our wild-looking but picturesque guard mounted on their wiry steeds, and carrying the long Arab lances; then followed the compact mass of cavalry composed of ourselves; the rear was brought up by what might be termed a heterogeneous crowd formed of stragglers, servants, and muleteers—a few being on foot whose horses had broken down. And so we rode forward, making quite an imposing spectacle—the standard bearer, with waving Union Jack, riding on ahead, adding not a little to the importance of the general appearance of the troop that followed close behind his horses' hoofs. A brief general halt was called at the bend of the road where, as if by magic, the whole splendid view of the grand old city suddenly burst upon us, so suddenly indeed that perhaps it might be said almost to take one's breath away. Perhaps it may have surprised me more than the others, as I was neither looking out for nor expecting such a glorious sight at the moment. Where we halted is supposed to be the spot on which 'when Jesus beheld the city he wept over it.' I have previously taxed my weak powers in attempting to describe the scene as beheld from here by ourselves, therefore I will not ponder further on it now. The standard-bearer and the Bedawin guard advanced, and we followed pouring down the slope of Olivet, through the Jewish cemetery into the valley of Jehoshaphat, winding

along the rocky roadway above the dry bed of the brook Kedron, and also I think the Tombs of Zechariah, Absalom, Jehoshaphat, and cave of St. James—then on towards the Garden of Gethsemane close to the wall of which we rode, passing it on our right. The road now bears off to the left across the brook, with the square enclosure of the Tomb of the Blessed Virgin Mary and subterranean rock-hewn church hard by on the right, and proceeds up the steep and stony incline of Mount Moriah, where St. Stephen is said to have been martyred, to St. Stephen's gate—which we passed without entering. The Turkish guard stationed there looked at us in silence and with a species of stolid amazement. The road here turns sharply to the right, and close to the outside of the walls and round the hill of Bezetha turns the angle of the city, near to Jeremiah's prison and Herod's gate, which is closed; and leaving Jeremiah's Grotto on the right, we ride down a small but steep incline into a roadway near to and leading through the Damascus gate. We turn another angle of the city wall, and our grand imposing cavalcade—with flying banner and Arab lancers leading the way—crowd down the gentle incline of the valley of Gihon and face direct for the Jaffa gate—passing the site of our late encampment which one almost expects to see there still—but it has vanished. And thus we ride on through numbers of staring Jews, Greeks, Turks, and I know not how many other representatives of nations, and enter the Holy City. Oh what a noise our clattering horses' hoofs made over the hard stones as we passed through the Jaffa gate into sacred Jerusalem; but I trust the general excitement around did not cause any of our party to forget the respect due from all who enter the city of the Great King. I did not look much around, but did not myself omit to ride within the sacred precincts bare-headed.

CHAPTER XI.

ONE NIGHT IN JERUSALEM AND RETURN TO JAFFA.

ARRANGEMENTS had been made by the proprietor of the Mediterranean Hotel to accommodate our whole party for one night, consequently thither we rode. The crowd of spectators here, in the Street of David, was very dense, and the variety of costumes huddled together made the scene both rare and strange. As our troop poured through the gate and into the city, there was soon almost a dead block. I happened to be well to the front, but found great difficulty in urging and pushing my horse through the concourse. The hotel fortunately was quite near the gate, otherwise we should soon have been in difficulties. Opposite the hotel it was quite a sight, many of the officers even in front could not reach the entrance on horseback and were forced to dismount, and it was laughable to see some who had private saddles of their own struggling to get them off their horses' backs, also saddle bags, &c., before resigning the animals to their grooms; for anything left behind now in such a crowd and collection of, it may be, the worst characters one would ever care to fall in with, would never be seen again, for such a thing as a policeman in Jerusalem I never heard of. One must look after himself there, and be his own policeman.

By the time we reached the hotel, it was five o'clock, perhaps a little past, consequently we had two hours to while away before dinner, which was at seven. Great preparations had been made for our reception—two large extra tables were prepared for dining accommodation for the mid-

shipmen in a separate spacious room. The hotel, to be capable of holding our party besides other visitors, will be easily understood to be no mean building, especially for Jerusalem. Of course several midshipmen had to cram into one bed-room, and rough it considerably for the night, but all managed to be stowed away and found a sleeping corner somewhere, although for a time several were sitting outside, looking disconsolate, as they said they had no bed-room to go to. However, by and by, they too were provided for. The first thing to be thought of was the baggage; the mules had arrived safely through all their perils, and nothing whatever, that I heard of, had been lost. Piles of bags soon commenced to collect down below, and after securing my own traps I returned to my former little room, which had been secured for me by the landlord, to adorn myself in uniform, the order of our captain being that while in Jerusalem uniform should be worn. An extra bed had been placed in my room, and I had the option of choosing my officer companion. After dressing and refreshing ourselves with a good wash, we sallied forth for our last and farewell stroll through the streets of Jerusalem. As a matter of course we first bent our steps to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, for prayer and thanksgiving to Him who had so far conducted us in safety through a journey not without its dangers. This was our last visit to this most sacred of all sacred edifices—and in all probability we shall never enter it again. Ah! well, there is no use sorrowing; all things in this world have an end; we must not look for lasting pleasures here, for they do not belong here, they are of another world we have not yet reached. We entered the church and stayed for a brief period at the Stone of Unction, and then went direct to our Lord's Tomb. We entered the first little chamber, in the centre of which is the stone that is said to have closed the mouth of the grave, and which was miraculously rolled away. Of course there must

necessarily be much doubt as to the genuineness of this stone, but we must let that pass. There were so many people in this little chamber-waiting their turn to go in to the inner and still smaller chamber where The Grave is, that our turn was some time in coming, but it came at last, and we entered and prayed for the *last time* by The Grave of our dear, our dearest Lord. Our prayers had to be brief, for so many were still waiting without, so we had to tear ourselves away from the Grave, that dear, holy little spot, never, perhaps, to see it again. A monk, I think two monks, were there on watch and guard. We now repaired to Mount Calvary. The little chapel was shrouded in a mournful gloom. We approached, and in turn knelt, made lowly reverence, and pressed our lips to the spot marked on the rock as where The Cross had stood. We kissed it for the last time, and retired a short distance to allow others to approach. We knelt in solemn prayer undisturbed on Mount Calvary. We prayed for the last time on that Holy Mount. The time came for us to go; retiring backwards I took my last lingering look at the Holy Place and left. It seems sad even to repeat here that little word 'last' so frequently, but it must be so, and presently we pass the Stone of Unction for the last time, and quit the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. How the scene alters immediately one is outside its sacred portals, and how holy, solemn thoughts are driven from one's head. For you are directly beset on all sides by a pestering crowd to buy some of their wares, consisting of carved shells, rosaries, crucifixes, bitumen from the Dead Sea worked into bowls and cups, with a variety of other things; and to get clear of these people is no easy matter, and as cleanliness is not a prevailing virtue among them it makes one almost shudder as they touch and even take hold of your clothes. One I shall not soon forget, whose discordant voice seems even now to grate upon my nerves. He, for I took the object for a boy or young man,

but it was very difficult to say whether *it* was male or female, had a voice like a high pitched woman's. I do not know that I even once escaped this object during my visits in the neighbourhood of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre.

Having got clearly off, we went through Palmer Street into Christian or Patriarch Street, and so on to the Via Dolorosa, and paid a final visit to Nachly's woodwork establishment, to make our concluding bargains and purchases. Several of our shipmates were already here employed in a similar manner. Anything coming from Jerusalem we seem to have quite a childlike fondness for; we even carefully keep this man's roughly printed card, bearing on it the following inscription, 'NACHLY'S,' that's the heading; then underneath, 'Best articles of olive and other wood at the lowest possible prices.—Jerusalem, Via Dolorosa.'

Finishing our purchases, we retraced our steps to the hotel, where a preparation for a large dinner-party was going on. The company that sat down numbered about one hundred. At, or soon after dinner, a portion of our pilgrim certificates arrived from the Latin convent, but I did not get mine until returning to the ship, when it was forwarded with some others. Breakfast was ordered for five o'clock next morning, and we were to be on the road for Jaffa as soon after as possible. The baggage was ordered to be ready by nine o'clock this evening, but that was afterwards altered to the first thing in the morning. We retired to our rooms shortly after dinner, and the finding of space in our limited packing accommodation for all our many purchases was no easy matter; but difficulties were in the end surmounted, and everything got stowed away. It was so late by the time all my packing was finished and preparations complete for the morrow's journey, that this was the only evening I was prevented adding to my journal letter; but I trust all omissions

will now be made up, for the account I have given in these pages of the day's doings and adventures, I trust, is moderately complete. The day had been an interesting one, and one that should by no means be passed over. However, it is getting late, I feel very fatigued, and long to have my head on the pillow. The day has been a hard one, and this, my last night in the Holy City, promises to be one of sound repose. Good night.

I was up betimes as usual, and 'all there,' to hand my baggage to the man when he called for it, with the exception of strapping my railway rug, which took but a very short time. The house was soon now alive with the voices of many midshipmen, and by 5 a.m., or soon after, it presented a very busy scene.

We took our farewell view of the Mount of Olives, Hill of Offence, and surrounding prospect, including a large portion of the Holy City, the Mosque of Omar, Hezekiah's Pool, &c., from the house-top. A substantial breakfast was not long in being despatched, and we began to think of our horses. About the first words I heard spoken on entering the breakfast room were, 'Have you heard about the Oxford and Cambridge boat race?—the Cambridge (I think it was) have won.' There seemed something so strange and thoughtless in the remark; one would certainly have believed that the thoughts of most persons would have been otherwise occupied than by such frivolous topics as this on the occasion of leaving Jerusalem, but no, it was not so. The midshipmen's horses were awaiting them outside the Jaffa Gate; those of the senior officers were close outside the hotel, by the low wall that enclosed the moat around the tower of Hippicus, facing the bishop's house. By-the-by, I should have mentioned that the Bishop of Gibraltar had taken his leave of us the previous evening, and slept at Dr. Gobat's. He was intending to continue

his tour through Galilee. We met with him, or traces of him, twice during the remainder of our stay on the coast of Syria. The first time it was only his name; he had preceded us, and we found the words, 'The Bishop of Gibraltar,' written in the visitors' book at the convent on Mount Carmel, about the day previous to our own visit, I think. And at Beyrout subsequently one of our party met and spoke to his lordship. But this, perhaps, is anticipating.

It was 7 A.M., or near about that time, before I found myself in the saddle, and it must have been fully that time before we started. I had received one letter in Jerusalem, and had expected a second addressed to the care of the Bishop; as it had never arrived, I left word this morning to have it forwarded to Malta, should it do so by next mail. By the time we were nearly ready to make a move, and sitting on our horses in front of the bishop's house, both he and Mrs. Gobat came out into the balcony to say a few kind words and bid us adieu. Doubtless the Bishop of Gibraltar would also have been there had not the early hour and his late fatigues prevented him. The beggars and sellers took advantage of our presence up to the last moment, but our horses were now on the move, we bade adieu to all our acquaintances, and walked our animals slowly down David Street, passed through the Jaffa Gate, and so quitted the sacred city of Jerusalem. More than once did I look back at these old walls before the windings of the road shut them out from my view, and thought how unlikely it was that I should ever see them again, and it would be, perhaps, only when we should all rise again with our bodies, that I should see the new and heavenly Jerusalem. So farewell Jerusalem, farewell thou city of the Great King, where so many mighty works have been wrought—where my Saviour and my Lord so often preached, where He healed the sick and recovered the blind, where He instituted the holy eucharist,

where, in His agony, His sweat was as it were great drops of blood, where He was buffeted and spit upon, where He was crucified for our sins, even for ours; where He lay in the grave three days and rose again, and where He ascended from earth to heaven, after that He had accomplished His vast and tremendous work to the full. Adieu, then, to that Holy City, in and near which all these transcendent events took place. I can never expect to see thee more; and need I be ashamed if just one burning tear rolls down my cheek as I turn my head away, and the sight of thee is lost to me for ever? but how truly may I declare that though thou art lost to sight thou wilt for ever be to memory most dear. Farewell!

The main body of the cavalcade being some distance in front and on the other side of the gentle decline of the valley of Gihon, we had to ride forward to 'overhaul' them, as sailors say. We had a long, long journey before us, of, to make a guess, about forty miles, but put down only as thirty-six geographical, and taking into consideration the incessant riding we had had since starting on the Dead Sea and Jordan trip last Monday morning, and this is Thursday, we were neither quite so fresh nor ready for so long a journey as it was possible to be, nevertheless we were quite fit and willing to tackle the job, even from the smallest and slimmest cadet to the stoutest and oldest officer in the company. But what about the horses? Of course there were some remounts amongst them, but nearly the whole number had carried their riders the entire round from Jaffa; breaks-down there will and must be, for even now, in starting, the horses seemed very tired and stiff. Strict injunctions were given to forbid galloping, and this was necessary, for although for the most part great care was taken of the horses, still there were, as a matter of course, some thoughtless young ones amongst us. Crossing the hill country of Judæa was tedious work, some of our animals moved along very slowly, and mine among

them. I dismounted at the worst pieces of ground and saved him all I could, but still he lagged, and I had visions of being numbered amongst the 'breaks-down.' The animal looked fresh and sleek enough, but this sort of work lasted for an hour or so, when he gradually recovered himself, and I rode forward to the front. I suppose his late exertions had caused stiffness, which wore off after a time, and he became warmed to his duty. The valley of Ajalon was passed, also the village of St. John, and by and by Kirjath-jearim. After about six hours' ride the hill country was crossed, and the vast wavy green plains of Sharon were in sight. No horses as yet had entirely given in, but a number in the rear seemed very nearly on their 'last legs.' This party obtained the name of 'the workhouse party.' A halt had to be called to enable 'the workhouse' to come up, but it was some time before they came in sight. However, at last might be heard the cry of 'here comes the workhouse.' Some distance ahead of them came a midshipman who had had a spill. He, poor young fellow, was bleeding much about the neck and ear, and had the appearance of having cut his throat, which was caused by a drop of blood trickling down from the ear. His wounds fortunately were only flesh, no bones had been broken. It appeared that he had been sitting side-saddle fashion on his mule, which, suddenly starting off, threw him on his face on to the hard road. He seemed to think little or nothing of the accident. As soon as 'the workhouse' rode up we were again put in motion, not again pulling rein until reaching 'the lunch halt' at mid-day, being the same place we had stopped at when on the way to Jerusalem. One of the midshipmen before reaching here was taken ill from sunstroke and had to dismount, but fetched in all right, and was soon under the kind care of the two doctors. Our lunch was a great improvement upon our first one here on the same spot, and we were not this time served with

chunks of tough old camel. Our first care on arrival was for our horses, to see them watered and then turned out to grass, for there was plenty in the neighbourhood. All the afternoon we kept steadily advancing across the lovely plains of Sharon, and reached in safety Arimathæa (Ramleh), where we halted for a few minutes. Here my horse managed to get loose, and give me a good chase before I secured him. The poor sun-stricken midshipman had to be left behind under the care of our assistant-surgeon, another officer, and a guide, to wait for the day waxing cooler before continuing the journey, when the boy became better and was able to sit his horse. He returned on board the following day, and soon recovered from his temporary illness. I do not think any of the horses thoroughly broke down until leaving Arimathæa, and evening approached, when another halt was called, and by-and-by some of 'the workhouse party' were seen in the distance advancing on foot, having left their horses behind on the road to take care of themselves. The head dragoman was enabled to make arrangements for supplying them with fresh horses or animals of some kind, from, I think, the 'beasts of burthen,' and once more our long train were on the march. We had been nearly twelve hours on the road journeying from Jerusalem to Jaffa when darkness overtook us a few miles from the town. At sunset the beauties of the plains of Sharon came out in their full power, and truly they looked very beautiful, bestrewn with flowers, and dotted over amidst their luxuriant greenness with trees. In fact I know not with what else to compare them, than with some nobleman's park on a gigantic scale. Two or three well mounted and well armed Arab robbers passed us towards the close of day, and a jackal sneaked up so near that several of our party rode at him, but he made off. I have more accidents to record before our arrival at the journey's end. The staff surgeon was thrown but most fortunately unhurt. A midshipman had a spill

but received no severe damage, and the commander's servant was thrown; he did not get off quite so easily, but after a few days, under the doctor's hands on board, he was all right again.

As night was approaching, those whose horses were able, were allowed to gallop forward, and several set off at a good spanking pace. It seemed quite wonderful the amount of endurance of these animals. Mine, for instance, when I gave him the rein at the last of the journey, carried me along over the ground at a good rattling pace, and seemed quite fresh even when riding into Jaffa. This ride of ours in the dark was a little hazardous owing to the unevenness of the road and holes, but everybody arrived all right. We dismounted outside the town, and were received by the captain who greeted us on our safe return. Boats awaited us at the landing, and by about 8.30 P.M. we were back once more on board our old ship.

PARTICULARS OF PARTY TRAVELLING THROUGH JUDÆA.

Party consisted of:—

Senior officers	12
Junior ,,	70
Servant (private)	1
Dragomen	2
Guide	1

Animals employed.

Horses and mules for party	86
Mules for baggage, servants, &c.	64
Camels for tents, furniture, &c.	45

Encampment.

Dining tent	1
Sleeping tents	16
Tents for baggage, cooking, &c.	6

Camp Servants.

Cooks, waiters, &c.	20
Guards, by day	2
,, by night	8

Arab Guards for Three Days' Excursion to Dead Sea, Jordan, &c.

For personal escort	10
Ditto ditto to conduct encampment to Jericho and back	20

	English miles by road.	Hours in accomplishing distance.
Jaffa to Jerusalem	40	10
Jerusalem to Solomon's Pools . .	10	3
Solomon's Pools to Bethlehem . .	4	$1\frac{1}{2}$
Bethlehem to Mar-Saba . . .	12	$3\frac{1}{2}$
Mar-Saba to Dead Sea . . .	12	3
Dead Sea to Jordan . . .	4	1
Jordan to Jericho	10	$2\frac{1}{2}$
Jericho to Jerusalem . . .	20	$6\frac{1}{2}$
Jerusalem to Jaffa	40	9
Total miles . . .	152	Total hours 40

PART III.

THE COAST FROM JAFFA TO CARMEL AND BEYROUT, CONCLUDING WITH THE EXPEDITION TO DAMASCUS.

H.M.S. TRAFALGAR HOMEWARD BOUND
(SOMERSET)

To face p. 261.

CHAPTER I.

FROM JAFFA TO CARMEL AND BEYROUT.

I now purpose somewhat cursorily to review the line of coast along which we sailed as far as Beyrout, bringing to remembrance some of the principal scriptural events in connection with the several places we passed.

Anchor was not weighed for a few days after our return from Jerusalem in order to wait for the mail, which duly arrived, as also did our letters safely. As there was now nothing further to cause delay, the anchor was hove up early next morning, and 'all hands' made sail. The breeze was fresh and fair, so that the old line of battle ship 'Trafalgar' soon sped gaily on her way along the coast, her wide spread of snowy canvas giving her the appearance of a gigantic bird with outstretched wings as 'she walked the waters like a thing of life.' But I do not propose talking shop, otherwise my naval readers will soon fall out with me. The line of coast after leaving Jaffa is low and sandy. The delicious smell of the blossom from the extensive orange groves was soon left behind. I am sure there would have been enough orange blossom to supply nearly all the young ladies in the world about to change their names, but here in vast profusion it was falling to the ground to be trodden under foot. The sandy outskirts of Sharon as we coasted by them looked very dreary and desolate, for we could see nothing of the inland beauty, save in the far distance the line of the hilly range of Judæa. There are three places called Sharon in Syria. First, the track of country between Joppa and Carmel, forming a part of the

extensive plain of the Mediterranean, stretching from the river of Egypt to Carmel; then there is another Saron or Sharon, which lies between Mount Tabor and the Sea of Galilee; the third lies beyond Jordan.

Cæsarea came in sight three hours after we had left Joppa, from which place it is about thirty miles, and from Jerusalem sixty-two. The ship bowling along as she was, must have taken another full hour to get off the city. From our decks we were unable to get a very perfect view of the still noble ruins of this once metropolis of Palestine; but we could see enough of the proud and princely city of Herod the Great by whom it was built (22 B.C.), to inspire the mind with awe and fill it with events that can never be blotted from the memory of man. It is sometimes called Cæsarea Palestine to distinguish it from Cæsarea Philippi. This city we are told 'was built by Herod the Great with great magnificence and beauty, and adorned with all the wonders of Grecian and Roman art.'[1] One of the most stupendous works of antiquity was also constructed here by Herod, the mole extending 200 feet into the sea, and portions of its ruins still remain. The structure is very massive, and constructed of huge blocks of stone or marble sunk in the sea to a depth of 20 fathoms on which the works were erected.[1] 'Perhaps,' says Dr. Clarke, 'in the history of the world there is no example of any city that in so short a space of time rose to such an extraordinary height of splendour as did this of Cæsarea, or that exhibits a more awful contrast to its former magnificence, in the present desolate appearance of its ruins. Its theatres, once resounding with the shouts of multitudes, echo no other sound than the nightly cries of animals roaring for their prey. Of its gorgeous palaces and temples, enriched with the choicest works of art, and decorated with the most precious marbles, scarcely a trace can be discerned. Within

[1] Bannister.

the space of ten years after laying the foundation from an obscure fortress (called the tower of Strato, as it is said, from the Greek who founded it), it became the most celebrated and flourishing city of all Syria. It was named Cæsarea by Herod, in honour of Augustus Cæsar, and dedicated by him to the Emperor, in the twenty-eighth year of his reign.' The city is now in utter desolation, the surrounding country being a sandy desert. No human being resides within miles, nor creature except jackals and other beasts of prey; the spot is utterly forsaken. It was here, somewhere among these ruins, that Herod on that certain day sat arrayed in royal apparel upon his throne and made an oration, 'and the people gave a shout saying, It is the voice of a God, and not of a man. And immediately the angel of the Lord smote him, because he gave not God the glory: and he was eaten of worms and gave up the ghost.' It was also in this city that Cornelius, the centurion of the Italian band, resided—a devout man who in a vision is directed by an angel to send to Joppa for Peter, who comes and preaches to Cornelius and his companions and they are baptised: the whole story is given in Acts x. Philip the evangelist also lived here (Acts xxi. 8). At Cæsarea too, a certain prophet named Agabus 'took Paul's girdle, and bound his own hands and feet, and said, Thus saith the Holy Ghost, so shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man that owneth this girdle, and shall deliver him into the hand of the Gentiles,' but St. Paul, although besought not to go to Jerusalem, answered, 'What mean ye to weep and to break mine heart? for I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus.' All doubtless are aware that this brave and noble servant of the Lord's died by martyrdom in Rome. He was here at Cæsarea imprisoned for two long weary years, at the end of which time he makes that eloquent appeal in behalf of himself and Christianity, which makes such a powerful effect

upon the Governor Felix (Acts xxiv.). St. Paul leaves Palestine for ever, embarking from Cæsarea for Rome, where ultimately he lays down his life for Jesus. It was in this once grand city that Eusebius the historian was born, and he was bishop of Cæsarea at the beginning of the 4th century, and here Origen studied and wrote. As the ship sails past these silent but imposing ruins, how the eye is riveted and the thoughts fixed upon bygone days and events that one can now only read of in history! To think that this city once contained 200,000 inhabitants, as it is stated, opens the mind to what it once was, for by its remaining ruins a correct judgment cannot be arrived at; as much of the marble of its once beautiful temples, theatres, and mansions has been conveyed away to adorn more modern buildings at Jaffa and Beyrout.

If we choose to take the statements of Josephus respecting the harbour or mole, we have something truly astonishing to contemplate, but I fear we cannot credit his sayings in this instance, and must simply put them down for great exaggeration. For instance, he informs us that *the mole* was built of stones more than fifty feet long, eighteen wide, and nine deep; and he says, 'The sea itself, upon the flux of the tide from without, came into the city and washed it all clean!' Pray could this great historian, when he wrote this fib, for what milder expression can we find, have remembered that there is no appreciable tide here at the head of the Mediterranean? The frightful massacre of 20,000 Jews in this city was occasioned by Herod, who erected heathenish temples and theatres, and set up idols. The Jews were so displeased, that disputes arose between them and the idolatrous citizens, the bloody tragedy then took place and the whole Jewish nation flew to arms and only ceased to fight when they ceased to exist. But we must take our leave of Cæsarea, for our gallant old ship has in the meanwhile hurried us past it, and its ruinous remains

are now left astern. The reason for the utter desertion of this city must be from the aqueducts being broken no adequate supply of water could be obtained, and so the surrounding country has gone back to its former barren sandy state, and the sand from the sea has covered much that was once fertile and green.

Onward hurries the ship, every stitch of canvas bulging and straining, filled with the favourable breeze, dashing the briny foam from her bows, which flows on either side into milk-white streams. Mount Carmel is in sight, but still some miles distant. It is to be the extent of our day's journey, and we are to anchor under its shade for the night. How bold and abrupt its range of about eight miles looks, terminating in a promontory, forming a portion of the Bay of Acre, which at present has not opened to our view, being round the corner, so to speak! Now we can see the famous Carmelite Convent perched on the extremity of the mountain looking towards the sea, at an elevation of somewhat less than 1,000 feet. The extreme height of Mount Carmel, says Volney, is 2,000 feet; for my own part I should think it was scarcely so high. I should imagine the inland view of it as it rises majestically from the plains of Esdraelon and Jezreel must be very fine indeed, but this we had no opportunity of beholding.

We 'round' the promontory; 'All hands' are piped to 'shorten sail and bring ship to an anchor.' In a very few minutes the rigging is black with men swarming up the ratlines. Royals and top-gallant sails are clewed up, and the ship sails into the Bay of Acre with lessened speed. 'Hands by the topsail halyards' is the next order, followed by 'round in the weather topsail braces, lower the topsails,' then 'hands by the anchor, stand clear of the cable on the lower deck—one, two, three, let go;' and we are anchored near Kaifa off Carmel. It was too late to go on shore that evening, but next day the midshipmen were let loose, and off

they went for a ramble up the mountain. I landed about ten A.M., provided with sandwiches and a flask of brandy and water, intending to make a day of it. The landing at Kaifa was not a very convenient one, and several of the natives came off to the boat to press their services to carry us on shore, which, however, we declined, and shifted for ourselves. After a futile effort to get out of the town by walking directly through it from the beach, wishing to inspect a ruin close by, I was directed by a native in another direction, for which, as a matter of course, he wanted bacsheesh, but did not get any. In Kaifa itself I could find nothing of interest. It is a small and dirty Turkish town, but outside we found some nice houses and a respectable looking hotel. Somewhat less than an hour's walk and climb brought us to the summit of the mountain, where stands the Carmelite Convent. The side up which we climbed was very steep and rugged. On our way to the monastery we met several midshipmen, one of whom had picked up a scorpion and was conveying it on board for microscopic examination. He carried it in his waistcoat pocket, and on my remarking upon the danger of so doing, he said, 'It's all right, he's lashed up.' I thought the remark so very characteristic of a young sailor. The curse denounced by Amos has fallen upon the mountain. We saw no shepherds' habitations, 'and the top of Carmel shall wither'—it had withered (Amos 1, 2). Its sides have herbs and brushwood, as well as some trees, but there are no longer rich pastures here. Lamartine, who followed along it for nearly four hours, says that it 'presented to us everywhere the same severe and solemn aspect. It is a gigantic and almost perpendicular wall.' On reaching the convent, the view, although very fine, disappointed me. I had hoped for *the view*, which is only obtainable much higher up, but how to get there we knew not. If only we could have accomplished it, we should have seen the little town of

Nazareth, where 'the Annunciation' took place, and where the youthful life of our Lord was passed; a few miles to the south of which is Nain, where our Saviour, as He went into the city, met that sorrowful procession coming out carrying a dead man, the only son of his widowed mother. Our Lord had compassion on her and said, 'Weep not.' Then He touched the bier and said, 'Young man, I say unto thee, arise.' The dead body immediately came to life, and the son was restored to the joyful and wondering mother. A short distance from this is the town of Endor, where the far-famed witch lived, possibly in one of the caves or caverns which abound in the neighbourhood, and where through her means the spirit of Samuel appeared to Saul. Some four or five miles to the north towers Mount Tabor, about 3,000 feet. This was the high mountain to which 'Jesus took Peter, and James, and John, his brother (the same three He took with Him the night of the betrayal to Gethsemane) apart,' and was transfigured before them; 'His face did shine as the sun and His raiment was as white as the light; and a voice out of the cloud was heard, saying, This is My beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased.' Close to this 'high mountain' is a hill some 200 feet high, called the Mount of Beatitudes; this is where our Lord preached that most sublime of all lessons contained in the 5th, 6th, and 7th chapters of St. Matthew, called the Sermon on the Mount. The eye travelling further west rests over Tiberias, and wanders over the region of the expansive lake of Galilee. Would that we could roam its banks, and visit the sites of Capernaum, Chorazin, and Bethsaida, pondering at leisure over all the great events of which this region is the theatre. How can we realise, while we stand on Mount Carmel, that we are really so near to all these places? but still it is so. Will not our visit, therefore, to this fine old mountain be ever engraven on our minds? Can it ever leave our memory? Here, at the foot of this

mountain on the plain of Esdraelon, was the scene of Barak's great battle with Sisera, and where he was afterwards killed by Jael, the wife of Heber, the Kenite, by driving a nail (a tent pin) into his head while asleep. The notable river Kishon flows through these plains and into the Bay of Acre.

Our visit to the convent on Carmel was a very pleasant one. We were received and entertained in such an agreeable and kind manner by one of the monks, that we cared not to hurry away. On reaching the walls of the monastery we beheld two or three enormous dogs as if keeping sentry over the building, and ugly sentries, too, provided you wished to pass and they raised an objection. However, any little uneasiness we may have experienced by the sight of these formidable creatures was soon overcome by a servant at the monastery ushering us into the visitors' room, where an attendant almost immediately served wine, a peculiar, light, red-coloured liquor, in small tumblers. One of the Carmelite monks then entered and became our entertainer. Coffee in the usual Syrian style was served shortly after the wine, when we rose, and were conducted round the monastery, at least those portions of it free for the traveller to see. The dimensions of the building being very extensive occupied us considerable time in inspecting. We were led through the dormitories set apart for travellers; everything was extremely neat and clean. In the church we descended to Elijah's cave, where he dwelt. We had previously been shown into another cave, when ascending the Mount, which was, if I mistake not, that of Elisha; but our self-constituted guide being perfectly unacquainted with our language and we his, a good deal had to be made out by guess-work. How vividly a review of the lives of these two holy prophets comes into one's mind while standing on the actual spot where they once lived! The story, for instance, of the village of Shunem, through which he, Elisha,

so often had occasion to pass, and the hospitality of the Shunamitish couple, who prepared for him 'a little chamber' with 'a bed, and a table, and a stool, and a candlestick,' for him to rest during the night. Shunem, I suppose, is fifteen or twenty miles from where Elisha lived in the cave on Mount Carmel, so that the journey thither was a fatiguing one, and he must have been glad of a little rest. This woman was childless, and her husband was old; nevertheless, for her goodness Elisha promised that she should have a son, which came to pass. The son grows up, doubtless doted upon by his fond mother. One day, while the father was with the reapers on the plain of Jezreel close by, the boy goes out to him, and is looking on at the reapers. The sun on these plains at harvest time burns with a fierce heat. Suddenly the boy cries out to his father, 'My head, my head.' He was sun-stricken. The distressed parent asks a young man to carry him to his mother. The poor sorrowing mother takes him upon her lap, where he remained for some time, and then died. Imagine her anguish. She takes him up stairs and lays the body on the bed set apart for Elisha when he came that way, leaves the room, and shuts the door. She then calls to her husband to send one of the young men with an ass that she may ride off to Carmel to Elisha. So with all haste she goes with her servant to Mount Carmel, and when Elisha sees her coming in the distance, he sends his servant to see what is the matter. But she mentions not her grief until she can do so to Elisha himself. Elisha goes with the woman to Shunem and finds the child dead and lying upon his bed. For a time he is absorbed in prayer. He then, as if to infuse warmth into the dead body, lay 'upon the child, and put his mouth upon his mouth, and his eyes upon his eyes, and his hands upon his hands: and he stretched himself upon the child; and the flesh of the child waxed warm. Then he returned, and walked in the house to and fro, and went up, and

stretched himself upon him: and the child sneezed seven times, and the child opened his eyes,' and so the child is restored alive to his now joyful mother.

The Cave of Elijah is a small compartment apparently cut out of the rock, and not a tenth part so large as the rock cave-house of Elisha. A light is always burning over the altar of this little chapel. The place where the wonderful scene related in 1 Kings xviii. happened, is pointed out some few miles from here, and higher up the mountain. Let us briefly recall to mind the miraculous event. It was in the reign of the most wicked King Ahab and Jezebel his wife; the priests of Baal were all over the land, and Ahab's idolatrous temples everywhere. And to effect her wicked apostasy, Jezebel worked a deadly persecution against the prophets of the Lord, but the good man Obadiah managed to save many from her blood-thirsty clutches by concealing them in caves, where he feeds them with bread and water. In reply to the question, 'What doest thou here, Elijah?' he replies, 'I have been very jealous for the Lord God of Hosts: for the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword; and I, even I only, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away.' But the work is arrested by the interposition of the Lord in a series of awful judgments and stupendous miracles. The Tishbite prophesied to Ahab that there shall be no rain nor dew on the earth for some years. It is then that he is told of the Lord to flee and hide himself by the brook Cherith. For three years and six months the dreadful drought continued. Near its close, Ahab says to Obadiah, the governor of his house, 'Go into the land, unto all fountains of waters, and unto all brooks: peradventure we may find grass to save the horses and mules alive, that we lose not all the beasts. So Ahab went one way by himself, and Obadiah went another way by himself.' The latter went towards Carmel, and he meets Elijah there, who says to him, 'Go, tell thy lord,

Behold Elijah is here.' Obadiah is terrified at the very idea, and says that his master had caused the land to be searched throughout for Elijah; but the holy prophet answers, 'As the Lord of Hosts liveth, before whom I stand, I will surely show myself unto him to-day.' So Obadiah goes and tells Ahab, who comes to meet Elijah, and says to him in anger, 'Art thou he that troubleth Israel?' 'I have not troubled Israel,' the bold Tishbite replies, 'but thou, and thy father's house, in that ye have forsaken the commandments of the Lord, and thou hast followed Baalim. Now therefore send, and gather me all Israel unto Mount Carmel, and the prophets of Baal four hundred and fifty, and the prophets of the groves four hundred, which eat at Jezebel's table.' Ahab had not by his side his wicked and bold wife, so he sank before this brave, good man, and sends and gathers the children of Israel and the prophets together on Mount Carmel—the east end—at a place where formerly there had been an altar to the Lord, which had been pulled down, and replaced by one to the idol Baal. Never before had there been seen on this spot such a multitude with such a mighty discussion and momentous question to settle. Elijah approaches, and thus addresses the concourse, 'How long halt ye between two opinions? if the Lord be God, follow Him: but if Baal, then follow him.' An impressive silence is the only reply. Again Elijah essays to speak. 'I, even I only, remain a prophet of the Lord; but Baal's prophets are four hundred and fifty men. Let them therefore give us two bullocks; and let them choose one bullock for themselves, and cut it in pieces, and lay it on wood, and put no fire under: and I will dress the other bullock, and lay it on wood, and put no fire under: and call ye on the name of your gods, and I will call on the name of the Lord: and the God that answereth by fire, let Him be God.' To this the people acquiesced. Elijah then requested the prophets of Baal to choose a bullock, to dress it and call on the name of their gods. They did so,

and from morning till noon they called on Baal to hear them. 'But there was no voice, nor any that answered. And they leaped upon the altar.' How intensely exciting must have been the scene! Elijah mocks them, and says, 'Cry aloud: for he is a god; either he is talking, or he is pursuing, or he is in a journey, or peradventure he sleepeth, and must be awaked.' Their excitement becomes quite maddening, they cry aloud, cutting themselves with knives and lances, 'till the blood gushed out upon them.' But still no reply comes. Midday comes and goes, and still no sign; evening has come, still 'there was neither voice, nor any to answer, nor any that regarded.' All hope with them is accordingly given up. Wait, and see the approaching victory of the man of God. He calls to the multitude to come near to him, and all the people draw round about him. 'And he repaired the altar of the Lord that was broken down;' he takes twelve stones, and in the name of God, builds with them an altar, round about which he digs a trench. He places the wood in order, cuts the bullock in pieces, and never doubts but that the Lord will hear his prayer. And to make the miracle that he knows is about to be performed more striking and convincing, he directs that four barrels of water be poured over the wood and over the sacrifice; this he has done three times. 'And the water ran round about the altar; and he filled the trench also with water.' At the time of evening sacrifice Elijah drew near to the altar, and said, 'Lord God of Abraham, Isaac, and of Israel, let it be known this day that Thou art God in Israel, and that I am Thy servant, and that I have done all these things at Thy word. Hear me, O Lord, hear me, that this people may know that Thou art the Lord God, and that Thou hast turned their heart back again.' No repetition of this prayer has to be made, for lo and behold, immediately 'the fire of the Lord fell, and consumed the burnt sacrifice,' and so tremendously fierce was

the fire, that it not only burnt up the wood on which the sacrifice was placed, but consumed even 'the stones and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench.' When the concourse beheld the grand and awful sight, they fell on their faces, and cried, 'The Lord, He is the God; the Lord, He is the God.' The vengeance of God now falls on the four hundred and fifty wicked prophets of Baal. Elijah orders them to be taken down to the river Kishon, which flows at the base of the mountain, and there he slays them, or rather, perhaps, causes them to be slain, suffering not a single one to escape. Then Elijah said to Ahab, 'Get thee up, eat and drink; for there is a sound of abundance of rain.' Elijah returns to the top of Carmel and prays earnestly to the Lord for rain; he sends his servant to look towards the sea, but he returns seeing nothing; seven times he goes, and on the seventh time he sees rise from the Mediterranean a small cloud like a man's hand. Elijah despatches him off to Ahab with the message, 'Prepare thy chariot, and get thee down, that the rain stop thee not.' In the meanwhile, the heavens become 'black with clouds and wind, and there was a great rain. And Ahab rode, and went to Jezreel. And the hand of the Lord was on Elijah; and he girded up his loins, and ran before Ahab to the entrance of Jezreel.' Such, then, is the miraculous story which concluded the fearfully prolonged drought of three and a-half years. The wonderful event of a man of Elijah's advanced age being able to run for about twelve miles, in the face of the heavy wind and rain, plainly shows that 'the hand of the Lord was upon him;' and it may be that he so performed the journey to evince his respect to Ahab, as a king, and to prevent the government from being disturbed from previous events.

I think that we have now pondered sufficiently in this cave of Elijah and the church built over it, and have given up quite as much time as we can spare to the cogitations

it has given rise to. Otherwise we might still further follow the prophet in his flight from the revengeful Jezebel at Jezreel to Beersheba. However, as it has no immediate connection with Mount Carmel, we will not do so. From the top of the convent we had a very fine view indeed of the Bay, including the sweep round, which took in Acre, the mountain, and a considerable expanse of country. Acre seems to have derived its present name from being the last place surrendered by the Knights of St. John, and from them took the name of St. Jean d'Acre. I am not aware of its being much named in the Bible. Its ancient name Accho we find in Judges i. 31, where it is said that Asher did not 'drive out the inhabitants of Accho,' which proves it to be a very ancient place to have existed at so early an age. In the Apocryphal books it is mentioned under the name Ptolemais, so called by Ptolemy Soter, who rebuilt and beautified it. It is again mentioned by St. Luke in Acts xxi. 7. St. Paul stops there one day on his journey from Tyre to Cæsarea. From the bird's-eye view we have of the city and its environs from this our elevated position, the plains around seem very green and fertile.

From this eyrie we again descended to the visitors' room, where some more of the light, sweet, and refreshing wine was handed to us; here we each wrote our name in the visitors' book, observing by it that the Bishop of Gibraltar had been here the day previous. Having deposited our quota in the collection box in Elijah's Cave towards the monastery itself or other charity, we took our leave of the kind, good monk who had taken so much trouble in showing us everything, and descended from Mount Carmel to the small level plain below, which is well cultivated and dotted over with ancient olive trees. It was disappointing not to have been present at one of the monastery services. I think both of us might have appreciated its solemnity, but which a certain gentleman, who shall be nameless, did

not, I think, fully appreciate who visited this convent some years ago, at least I should judge not from a passage I once read in a book written by him, viz.: 'Having now satisfied our curiosity and our appetites, we may pay our bill, and leave to others more in love with such matters the task of describing this great castle-convent, with its twenty monks chanting Latin to nobody, around holy places whose history is fabulous.' In reply to this I wrote in the margin the following note, or words to that effect—'*Chanting to nobody!!* What can the author mean? What can he be thinking about? OH, NO; not chanting to nobody, don't say that. They, these *holy, holy* men, were chanting to the Great God; for Whom alone they are living, for Whom they have left all to follow. How beautiful, how lovely, singing His praises; how joyful, and how near that great happiness that awaits all those who "*Believe*," for they will be for ever chanting *His* praises, and living with the dear, sweet Saviour who came on this earth to die and give Himself a ransom for their souls and bodies! Will you, who read this little note, pray for him who wrote it, just one short prayer, that God may make him *His heir* for all eternity? And may God bless you for your prayer.'

We went into the organ loft, and my companion was allowed to play the organ; and as its notes rolled through the church one could imagine the solemnity of the sound when mingled with the deep-toned voices of the monks.

When we returned on board in the afternoon, preparations were being made for sailing early next morning. Our stay here was indeed very short, but that was unavoidable; days were slipping by, and the orders were to leave the coast of Syria for England the first week in May.

Soon after daybreak next day the capstan was manned, cable shortened in, and anchor weighed. The wind was again favourable, and the ship was once more hurrying along the coast, bending under her canvas and the fine

morning breeze. The line of coast looked very pretty and green in the early sunlight as we ran past Acre and its plains, steering along the land direct for Beyrout.

Tyre is about thirty miles from Acre; we reached it early in the forenoon. Now, we who only passed Tyre without landing there, cannot be expected to give a very lucid description of it. All that remains of this once mighty metropolis is a hundred or so of ruinous, crumbling houses, almost entirely deserted. The fragments of this, in times gone by, the most powerful city of the world, are a monument striking indeed of the literal fulfilment of prophecy, perhaps the most exact on record. Is it possible—can we realise it—that those are the ruins of the city that said, 'I am a God; I sit in the seat of God'? (Ezekiel xxxiii. 2.) Can that be all that remains of a city declared by Pliny to be nineteen miles in circumference? Let us very briefly review its past history. Tyre signifies 'a rock.' We are told that she 'was the daughter of Sidon.' Josephus tells us it was founded by a colony of Sidonians 240 years before the building of Solomon's Temple, or about 1250 B.C.; but let us not trust too much to his statements, they are often full of errors. Joshua (xix. 29) alludes to it as 'a strong city;' so, making some allowance for the time it took to become so, the date of its building would be about 1300 years B.C. For a long time it was a 'crowning city' and stood unrivalled; its navy and commerce overspread the known globe, and it had no rival in the world. The inhabitants were as proficient artificers as the world could then produce, and for naval and commercial enterprise were unrivalled. This was the great and powerful city which baffled the proud Nebuchadnezzar and all his army for thirteen years, in a siege almost unparalleled, and the longest in history, except that of Ashdod. Every head grew bald and every shoulder peeled in this hard service against Tyrus. And when at last the city was abandoned, the

ingenuity of the inhabitants had removed all its wealth, and there were only deserted streets and empty houses. The city was utterly destroyed, but the people had escaped with all that was valuable to a neighbouring island. Seventy years afterwards they returned and built a new city, and in time it even rivalled its fallen predecessor. It has been said that Tyre in its mightiness 'cannot fitly be compared to any city ancient or modern. Alexandria of the former, and London of the latter times, may be considered as approaching the nearest to it.' The monopoly of commerce was so entire. For an account of its unsurpassed commercial magnitude the twenty-seventh chapter of Ezekiel must be referred to.

From what I could see of the city as we passed, and from what I can learn, there has been but little change since Mr. Maundrell visited it in 1697. He thus describes it—'This city, standing in the sea upon a peninsula, promises at a distance something very magnificent. But when you come to it, you find no similitude of that glory for which it was so renowned in ancient times, and which the prophet Ezekiel describes. On the north side it has an old Turkish ungarrisoned castle; besides which, you see here nothing but a mere Babel of broken walls, pillars, vaults, &c.; there being not so much as one entire house left. Its present inhabitants are only a few poor wretches harbouring themselves in the vaults, and subsisting chiefly upon fishing; who seem to be preserved in this place by Divine Providence as a visible argument how God has fulfilled His word concerning Tyre, namely, that "it should be as the top of a rock, a place for fishers to dry their nets on."' And to this day one still sees the nets drying on the rocks. Yes, look at the ruins of yonder sinful city, and listen to the words of the Lord, and say whether thou thinkest not they are fulfilled to the uttermost: 'Behold, I am against thee, O Tyrus, and will cause many nations to come up against

thee, as the sea causeth his waves to come up. And they shall destroy the walls of Tyrus, and break down her towers: I will also scrape her dust from her, and make her like the top of a rock. It shall be a place for the spreading of nets in the midst of the sea: for I have spoken it, saith the Lord God.' (Ezek. xxvi. 3–5.) Tyre can never rise more, she can never again be populous. The unhealthiness of the region prevents it. The modern name of Tyre is Sur. The famous Tyrian purple dye was procured from the shell fish called murex abounding on its shores. But we must perforce take our leave of the ruined city.

Our ship hurries us along the land, being herself pressed forward by the stiff fair breeze, which still holds and promises to carry us safely to Beyrout by the evening. I could not help thinking what pleasant and easy travelling this was, in comparison with labouring along over rocky, sandy, and hilly ground under a burning sun on horseback. Our allotted time being short, we could, of course, only hastily pass by this deeply interesting coast in review, and such a panorama as was being unwound before our eyes we had never before beheld, and, doubtless, most of us would never again see.

Sarepta, about fourteen miles north of Tyre, is the next point of interest. We are fast approaching it. The scenery here is excessively fine, the bold range of Lebanon is in full view, and behind, in the far distance, towers grand, hoary old Hermon, with his cloudy and snow-white head. The moving picture before us was very impressive, especially when one felt that he was looking on the unchanged scene our Saviour had beheld when passing through the coasts of Tyre and Sidon. Those mountains have moved not, those hills are just the same now as then. Oh! how can we make enough of the joy of being amongst and seeing the scenes He saw? for so soon now shall we have left this Holy Land and Palestine will be out of sight. Beyrout

cannot be considered in Palestine, although it is generally included in maps of that blessed country.

A few more turns up and down the deck, and once more heaving the log to ascertain the rapidity the vessel is travelling through the water, and we are close off Sarepta or Zarephath. In itself, apparently, there is but little to see. A small town on a hill sloping towards the sea, backed with the commencement of Lebanon. The plains at the foot of the hill are prettily green, clothed in their early summer garb. It was on these plains, it is supposed, that the ancient city stood. Perhaps this is the very place that Jesus came to when He 'departed into the coasts of Tyre and Sidon,' and when He healed the daughter of the woman of Canaan (Matt. xv. 21), and that this woman, whom Mark (vii. 26) calls a Syro-phœnician, belonged to the same city where the poor widow lived, to whom Elijah was sent from Cherith; and, perhaps, it was from being on this very spot that called to the mind of our blessed Saviour the event when He said, 'But unto none of them was Elias sent, save unto Sarepta, a city of Sidon, unto a woman that was a widow' (Luke iv. 26). The village is now called Sarafend. It (the present village) probably only dates from the twelfth century. The widow's cave, as it is called, is at the bottom of the hill we are now sailing past, on which stands the village. There are two groups of ruins on the plain near this, and they must have formed part of the city. It must have been somewhere near these ruins that the prophet Elijah dwelt during the long and grievous famine at the bidding of the Lord, who said to him by the brook Cherith, 'Arise, get thee to Zarephath, which belongeth to Zidon, and dwell there: behold, I have commanded a widow woman there to sustain thee.' So Elijah starts off on his long, tedious journey through Samaria, Galilee, &c., and finally arrives at his journey's end, weary and famished, after many days of hard travel.

He meets the widow woman at the gate of the city gathering sticks, and he called to her, and said, 'Fetch me, I pray thee, a little water in a vessel, that I may drink;' and as she departs to get the water, he asks her to bring just a morsel of bread with her, to which she gives the heart-rending reply, 'As the Lord thy God liveth, I have not a cake, but an handful of meal in a barrel, and a little oil in a cruse: and, behold, I am gathering two sticks, that I may go in and dress it for me and my son, that we may eat it, and die.' But the prophet tells her to fear not, and to go and do what she intended, first bringing him a little cake, and then make the same for herself and child. 'For' he tells her that the Lord God of Israel hath said, 'the barrel of meal shall not waste, neither shall the cruse of oil fail, until the day that the Lord sendeth rain upon the earth.' She believed the man of God, and did accordingly. For one whole year she sustained the prophet and her whole house, for 'the barrel of meal wasted not, neither did the cruse of oil fail, according to the word of the Lord which He spake by Elijah.'

It was after this the son, the only child of the widow, was taken very ill and died. And she in her sore distress, having the dead body of her offspring clasped to her bosom, said to Elijah, 'What have I to do with thee, O thou man of God? art thou come unto me to call my sin to remembrance, and to slay my son?' He answers, 'Give me thy son. And he took him out of her bosom, and carried him up into a loft, where he abode, and laid him upon his own bed.' How deeply Elijah feels for the poor widow's great sorrow! 'And he cried unto the Lord, and said, O Lord my God, hast Thou also brought evil upon the widow with whom I sojourn, by slaying her son? And he stretched himself upon the child three times, and cried unto the Lord, and said, O Lord my God, I pray thee, let this child's soul come into him again. And the Lord

heard the voice of Elijah; and the soul of the child came into him again, and he revived.' Elijah then takes the child, and leads him down out of the chamber to the now overjoyed mother, who is below in the house, and says, 'See, thy son liveth.' And she replies to Elijah, 'Now by this I know that thou art a man of God, and that the word of the Lord in thy mouth is truth.'[1] Our ship continues to hurry us along, and we are now looking back upon Sarepta. Before it is out of sight, and while our eyes are even resting upon the pretty little spot, pray let us learn a lesson of this poor widow, and the great and good feeling of charity which prompted her, even while herself in dire distress, to share *her little* with one who was hungry and thirsty. Such a deed requires no comment; but let each one of us say to himself, 'Go and do likewise.' 'Lonely and lowly Sarepta; scene of stupendous miracles, fare thee well! The Saviour of the world has set His seal of immortality on thee. Thy name will ever teach the great that the favour of our common Father above was never confined within the narrow limits of Jacob's seed; for unto no city of all the tribes of Israel was Elijah sent, but unto a poor widow within thy walls (Luke iv. 25–29). Let them of the "Synagogue" be "filled with wrath," but we shall cherish Thy memory all the more for the sweet lesson.'[2]

As the panorama gradually glided past, fresh beauties in the landscape were revealed, and the mountain scenery became quite grand. Hill above hill, and then bold Lebanon towering high over all, from 6,000 to 9,000 feet into the sky. Everything looked verdant, and the slopes of the hills seemed mostly covered with crops of corn and grass—the whole making a very pretty picture, and one the eye delighted to rest upon. The distance from Sarepta to Sidon

[1] How very similar this story is to the one of Elisha and the woman of Shunem!

[2] Thompson.

or Zidon would be about ten miles, and from Tyre twenty-five.

On yonder summit of rocky Lebanon was the grand abode of the eccentric Lady Hester Stanhope, niece of the great statesman William Pitt. Poor lady, what could have been the cause of the derangement of her brain? Perhaps it was grounded on the sad loss and death of her girlish love, Sir John Moore. The illness which finally carried her home was a long and painful one. She died in 1839. Dr. Thompson, at the request of the British Consul at Beyrout, performed the religious services at her burial, starting on the 'melancholy errand at one o'clock,' arriving about midnight. He thus describes the scene: 'After a brief examination, the Consul decided that the funeral must take place immediately. This vault in the garden was hastily opened, and the bones of General L——, or of his son, I forget which—a Frenchman who died here, and was buried in the vault by her Ladyship—were taken out and placed at the head. The body, in a plain deal box, was carried by her servants to the grave, followed by a mixed company, with torches and lanterns, to enable them to thread their way through the winding alleys of the garden. I took a wrong path, and wandered some time in the mazes of these labyrinths. When at length I entered the arbour, the first things I saw were the bones of the General, in a ghastly heap, with the head on top, having a lighted taper stuck in either eye-socket—a hideous, grinning spectacle. It was difficult to proceed with the service under circumstances so novel and bewildering. The Consul subsequently remarked that there were some curious coincidences between this and the burial of Sir John Moore, her Ladyship's early love. In silence, on the lone mountain at midnight, "our lanterns dimly burning," with the flag of her country over her, "she lay like a warrior taking his rest;" and we left her "alone in her glory." There was but one of her own nation pre-

sent, and his name was *Moore*.' The story of the last years of this unhappy lady is so well known that I will not give a repetition. How sad the scene as life's faint flickering light becomes dimmer and more dim, without a single European attendant—she, the once gay and brilliant niece of Pitt, dies, without a friend, on the top of yonder bleak mountain! Often were her conversations not only sane but clever. The uppermost idea of her diseased mind caused her to imagine that she was some day to ride into Jerusalem as queen by the side of the Messiah on a deformed mare, which she always caused to be tended with extraordinary care. Whilst pacing the deck, and slowly pondering over these sad reminiscences of the close of the life of one who once was justly considered a bright star amongst England's happy daughters—the ten miles from Sarepta to Sidon had dwindled down to little more than one, and we have now a fine view of the city.

The houses seem much crowded together, and I should fancy the streets to be narrow. The best part of Sidon is the beautiful mountain scenery. We have seen nothing to compare to it along the coast. Let us gaze hard and long at this place. It is a very ancient city, and one of the oldest in the world. Tradition tells us it was the second built after the Flood, and supposed to be founded by Sidon, the great grandson of Noah, more than 2,000 years before Christ. Solomon employed Sidonian workmen to carve wood for the temple, also to build and navigate his ships. Sidon was appointed to the tribe of Asher, but they failed to take possession of it (Judges i. 31). How difficult it is, while looking at this small town, to realise how powerful she ever was, and how from her very mightiness and strength none dared to molest her; so that to live carelessly like the Sidonians became quite a proverb! (Judges xviii. 7.) Even Joshua, it seems, ventured not to attack her; for when he chased the divers kings who 'came and pitched together at the waters of

Merom to fight against Israel, he smote them and chased them unto great Zidon'—but he fought not against this redoubtable metropolis. 'She built strong cities along the shore—Burat, and Gebal, and Arvad, and Accho, and Dor, and many more. She planted colonies in Cyprus and the Grecian isles, in Libya and in Spain; while by her side she nourished her fair daughter Tyre (who in time even outrivalled herself). Then began her long and sad decline. The streams of her prosperity were dried up and diverted. The proud Pharaohs from the Nile—the stern Assyrian from distant Nineveh—the cruel Chaldean and Persian from Babylon—the rough he-goat from Grecia—and the king of fierce countenance from the Tiber, all helped to lay poor Sidon in the dust.'[1] But still, in spite of the destructive powers of long centuries, Sidon still exists. Not so with her offspring; the once great city, unsurpassed in mightiness both in commerce and all else—she lies even with the dust, and can never again rise. 'Sidon, now called Saidi, has a population of about 15,000, and is still the chief mart for Damascus and Upper Syria; but the harbour is nearly choked up with sand. Without the walls are yet discoverable broken columns and fragments of edifices, the relics of its eclipsed and departed grandeur.'[2] A great multitude of the people, from both Tyre and Sidon, came unto our Saviour, 'when they heard what great things He did' (Mark iii. 8). We read that St. Paul touched here on his way to Rome from Cæsarea. 'And the next day we touched at Sidon. And Julius courteously entreated Paul, and gave him liberty to go unto his friends to refresh himself' (Acts xxvii.) The city, powerful as it had once been, was taken by Nebuchadnezar, who was satisfied with its mere submission, and permitted the Sidonians to retain their own kings. 'Entering afterwards into a league with Nectanebus, king of Egypt, against Darius Ochus, king of

[1] Thompson. [2] Bannister.

Persia, the latter laid siege to their city. Finding resistance useless, and that the chances of war were against them, they set fire to their ships and the city, in which was so large a quantity of gold and silver melted down by the fire, that Ochus sold the ashes for a considerable sum of money. The city was, however, soon rebuilt, as, about eighteen years after, we find it submitting to Alexander.'[1] It had many ups and downs, and finally came into the possession of the Ottoman Turks. It was the Sidonians who were said to have first introduced into Greece the use of letters, and to have been the first discoverers of the making of glass, as well as the first shipwrights. The history of Sidon is so long, covering thousands of years, that of course to ponder on it would be out of place in a little work such as the present.

Shortly after passing and leaving Sidon behind we sail by the spot where, *it is said*, that Jonah was cast by the whale on the beach, after being three days and nights in its belly. As to whether the event really did occur here, or where else, I cannot pretend to give an opinion. That little Turkish mosque-like-looking place is said to mark the spot, and is called 'the Tomb of Jonas.'

Our day's journey—and a very pleasant run it has been—is fast drawing to a close. Beyrout is in sight, and all we have to do is steer round the headland and run into the bay. However, it is somewhat further off than it looks, and about an hour and a half is occupied in getting over the distance. Well, I am sure the three days occupied in coming up the coast from Jaffa have been both exceedingly interesting and very instructive.

It was in the afternoon that the ship rounded the headland and sailed into St. George's Bay, anchoring off Beyrout.

[1] Bannister.

CHAPTER II.

BEYROUT AND MOUNT LEBANON.

THE view as we came sailing into the Bay was charming. On the left hand, noble Lebanon reared high his snowy summits, while at his feet was spread a carpet of fertility and verdure. Beyrout looked fresh and green, and very different from anything we had seen along the coast, Jaffa and Kaifa for instance. Part of the town is at the bottom of a hill, while the remainder with its suburbs spreads gradually up the hill, with houses on the outskirts dotted about amongst trees. It would really be very difficult to do Beyrout and its environs justice either in a picture or written description, and it must be classed with other places which should be seen before a correct idea of it can be entertained. The Bay of St. George sweeps round the base of hills and mountains—rugged and steep towards the north—pine forests spread abroad their dark shadows, and villages, churches, and convents dot the landscape. Around the suburb itself large orchards of mulberry-trees extend far and wide, illuminating the scenery with their bright greenness; here and there are tall palm-trees with their feathery tops. From some points of view one might almost fancy he beheld some pretty English watering-place, a portion of Torquay for instance, but the tall waving palm dispels the delusion, as it looks out from between and over the terraces of houses as they rise up the hill which slopes down towards the sea.

Whether or not Beyrout is mentioned in Holy Writ I cannot for certain say, but it is not under its present name.

Of course it is an open question as to whether the Berothai mentioned in 2 Sam. vii. 8, from which 'King David took exceeding much brass,' was Beyrout. Then again, can the Berothah mentioned by the prophet Ezekiel (xlvii. 16) be Beyrout? He says it 'is between the borders of Damascus.' From the relative positions of Samuel's Berothai and Ezekiel's Berothah we may infer them to be one and the same place; but as to whether the city of Beyrout is identical with them, I must leave it for those more competent than myself to discuss. The word, Dr. Wilson supposes or suggests, is derived from Berûth, the wife of Elion, who dwelt at Byblus. If so, it makes it of great antiquity. Bochart's opinion is, as well as others, that the Baal-berith mentioned in Judges ix. 33 was the god Baal of the city Berith or Beirut. We learn from the fragments of Sanchoniatho (who cannot unfortunately be much relied on through forgeries), but also from other ancient authors, 'that the chief seat of Baal-worship was in the regions around Byblus and Beirut.' I have just referred to these suggestions, and, without comment, will leave my reader to draw his own conclusions.

We are not told that Beyrout was ever visited by the Apostles, although Christianity was planted here at a very early date, and so flourished that it soon became the seat of a bishopric. It seems always to have been, the same as now, the most beautiful city on this coast, as well as very prosperous. Its decline may be dated from the time it was visited by a most fearful earthquake, and which entirely destroyed the city and overthrew the public buildings and palaces, burying in the *débris* multitudes of the inhabitants. Marks of this dreadful calamity still exist.

This bay, in which we are anchored, is named after St. George, for—so says legendary lore—it was here on this shore the brave saint fought the battle with and slew the dragon, and, if I mistake not, the very well down which

the conqueror threw the dreadful monster is still pointed out, together with the spot where he washed the blood from his hands after he had accomplished the dangerous business. Great improvements have taken place in Beyrout of late years, but its greatest wonder is the highway road cut by the French, which passes over Mount Lebanon, dives down upon the plains of Cœle-Syria, mounts again the heights of Anti-Libanus, crosses the range, and goes winding on through the desert to Damascus. Along this road, which is between seventy and eighty miles in length, a diligence runs daily either way between the cities of Beyrout and Damascus.

Several of us, as a matter of course, were very anxious to visit Damascus, and, previous to arrival, those who intended to undertake the journey gave in their names to the commander, who kindly undertook to see after the arrangements. It was hardly likely that the diligence would be able to accommodate all of us, so at first it was proposed to hire a carriage and post the distance, but this became infeasible when the number who wished to go increased to over twenty. I need hardly say that my name was included amongst the intended travellers. Although I have seen many countries and cities in many parts of the world, I never like to miss seeing all I am able, and besides my anxiety to visit Damascus and walk the streets of the oldest city in the world was no common one. Damascus appeared to me to be so out of the world, so cut off from everywhere, with desert around and with the two mighty ranges of Lebanon intervening between us and it, that the very magnitude of the journey seemed so romantic, that I fully made up my mind to undertake it even should I travel alone in the diligence.

Soon after the ship had anchored the commander accordingly started for the shore, returning on board in the evening, having made arrangements with a dragoman to supply horses, &c., and be ready for a move the following day at 1 P.M. I immediately made up my mind not to join *this*

party, there being a far more easy way of conveyance than on horseback, and also more expeditious—namely, the diligence; I therefore settled to go by it. There were also two naval cadets, who, from indisposition, were prevented joining the Jerusalem expedition, and they were anxious to go with me. So, without delay, I went on shore next morning (Thursday, I think), to secure three seats in the diligence. Landing in Beyrout, a Syrian gentleman kindly conducted me through the town to the office, his servant walking behind, leading a beautiful Arab horse, for which the gentleman told me he had given a very high price; and, indeed, to procure a real Arab, even here in Syria, was very difficult—the Bedouins, being so reluctant to part with them, ask such fabulous prices. I remarked more than once upon the beautiful looking horses we passed in the streets, but my companion seemed to think them generally inferior. The streets of Beyrout are mostly narrow and crooked, and the charm of viewing the city from the sea dissolves immediately on landing—the landing itself, and those who crowded around, being none of the cleanest. However, Beyrout is not all dirty; there is an agreeable freshness which pervades the outskirts, diffused, perhaps, mostly by the bright green mulberry groves, which so often one has to pass through.

My Syrian friend, on bringing me to the diligence office, still further showed his kindness by remaining with me and acting as interpreter. After a considerable amount of negotiation and talking, of which I understood but little or nothing, it appeared that three seats were not obtainable until Sunday or Monday. As, of course, I did not wish to spend my Sunday in a diligence, I took the places for Monday. This was unfortunate, as everybody had to return by Wednesday, consequently we could only have one whole day in Damascus. However, this was afterwards made all right by one of my expected travelling companions

altering his mind, and not wishing to go. So the tickets were changed for two on Saturday, there happening to be two vacant seats for that day—one in the bunquetta and one in the coupé. It was unlucky having thus to separate, but we were fortunate to get seats at all.

At the Hotel Belle Vue I met the mounted party waiting for their horses, which soon after arrived, and they were shortly afterwards 'under way' for Damascus.

I should have observed that before leaving the Company's office I was repeatedly directed to be on the spot at 3.30 A.M. on Saturday—a pretty early hour; and a servant of the Company was to be sent to our hotel to call us. There is one day to pass before our longed-for and interesting journey; and I must confess I was exceedingly anxious to be on the move, having somewhat of the same feeling I experienced before going to Jerusalem, fearing something might turn up to prevent the journey; however, nothing did. Now, perhaps, it may add a little interest to my description—and may I hope that some already exists in the mind of my reader?—if I say '*a few words*' about the grand old mountain range of Lebanon before we are actually crossing it. Having accomplished that feat and crossed both ranges, I, of course, can speak from personal knowledge; but I shall not rely on *it only*—I shall call to my assistance what I have culled from reading, and the opinions of men far abler than myself, and men who have travelled in the region considerably more than I had the opportunity of doing.

As we already know, Lebanon is not an isolated mountain, but a long chain of mountains commencing close to Sidon, and stretching away northward and eastward, forming the boundary of the Holy Land on the north. The magnificent rampart-like appearance of these mountains when approaching from the sea, may well be said to strike the traveller with astonishment and reverence. The

immense masses, as it were, thrown together, and towering high above the clouds, with the dark ravines and unsightly precipices with which their sides are seamed, add much to their solemn appearance. Volney graphically describes the view from Sannin, the highest range of Lebanon. We did not reach such an elevation. Whether or no he actually was on the summit himself I cannot say, but he describes the view one would have from that point. 'On every side, he beholds an horizon without bounds; whilst, in clear weather, the sight is lost over the desert, which extends to the Persian Gulf, and over the sea, which washes the coasts of Europe. He seems to command the whole world; while the wandering eye, now surveying the successive chains of mountains, transports the mind in one instant from Antioch to Jerusalem.' In crossing these mountains, and having a nearer view of what seemed little else in the distance than the mountain, with knitted brows, scowling in anger on all around—these furrows turn out to be precipices of fearful depth, and when looked into from above, when the atmosphere is thick, the eye being unable to fathom their vastness, strike one with a kind of awe certainly not desirable in our case; when winding along the mountain road in the diligence, we looked over, and with nothing whatever to prevent the lumbering heavy conveyance being precipitated into its depths, should anything either startle or frighten the horses. The general appearance of the mountain while travelling over it, may, I think, be best described by asking the reader to imagine whole piles of high steep hills being thrown together one on the top of another. One hill is mounted and climbed: then another and another; then, perhaps, a short level, and sometimes a decline, followed by hill upon hill until a summit is reached, when one imagines he must really be at the top of Lebanon, but he is nothing of the kind. Snow seems to be close by, but it is deceptive in its whiteness.

He fancies he has reached the height his horse and himself have been toiling for, when, quite disheartened, he sees another pile of hills heaped up before him. The higher he goes the more profound become the precipices, whose horrible jaws open as if ready to engulph him, should his horse take a false step. On the coach road of course there is not this danger, unless his horse should take fright at anything lying in the road.

Lebanon may be almost said to be thickly inhabited—four distinct tribes have their homes here, viz.—the Maronites, the Druses, the Metualis, and the Assarius, and their villages nestle among the slopes and declivities of the mountains. In some places these villages seem to hang over or under destruction from the nature of the perforated rock, which the running of mountain streams for ages has been gradually wearing away, until whole masses are apparently almost ready to become detached, and be launched into the depths below. Such occurrences have been known when thaws or earthquakes have taken place; rocks have lost their equilibrium, have crushed the neighbouring houses, and buried the inhabitants. 'This happened about twenty years before Volney's visit, when a fragment of the mountain, slipping from its base, overwhelmed a whole village, without leaving a single trace where it formerly stood. Still more lately, and near the same place, says that traveller, the entire side of a hill, covered with mulberries and vines, was detached by a sudden thaw, and sliding down the rock, was launched, like a ship from the stocks, into the valley below.' It may be wondered at that these mountaineers still cling to their perilous village homes, but the reason is simply they prefer so to live, than under the oppression of the Turks. It is not often that an accident occurs, while the oppression would be lasting and always. These people are exceedingly industrious, and it seems almost incredible how they turn

rocky regions into places of fertility, but still it is so. The soil, what there is of it, on these mountains is exceedingly productive, and from the toil of the cultivator luxuriant crops of corn are obtained, and all kinds of pulse. Numbers of small rivulets and mountain streams, coming it may be from the snow above, flow through these lofty regions, and from them much verdure is produced. Some of these streams, I understand, never fail; one large rapid one pointed out to me on the side of the mountain overlooking Cœle Syria, flowed on to the plains with considerable volume.

I find an allusion to landslips in Job xiv. 18, where the prophet says, 'And surely the mountain falling cometh to nought, and the rock is removed out of his place;' he then mentions about the waters wearing the stones. Dr. Thompson gives an instance in which the whole of a small village 'parted from the main mountain, and plunged with prodigious uproar into the wady below, carrying houses, gardens, and trees with it in horrid confusion. It completely stopped the river for seven days. Repeatedly have I stood upon the awful precipice, and gazed upon the wrecks of this avalanche with terror. Few heads are steady enough for the giddy peak; and no one breathes freely there, or looks without a shudder into the gulf, which opens fifteen hundred feet directly below him. The emeer relates that one man who was on the sliding mass escaped unhurt, but was ever after a raving maniac. I have seen many similar slides on Lebanon. Indeed they occur every winter, but rarely on so gigantic a scale, or accompanied by circumstances so romantic and tragical.'

The extreme height of the 'White Mountain,' as the word Lebanon signifies, is variously stated. Beeton says, 'its culminating peak is Dhor-el-Khodib, 10,050 feet above the level of the sea.' Bannister gives 11,000 feet, and adds, 'This must be the lowest elevation of its principal summits; and as they rise to this immense height with a

steep and precipitous ascent, and their crags hang over in wild gigantic masses, they present to the eye of the traveller as he advances towards them from the Mediterranean Sea on the one side, or the no less broken flatness of the desert on the other, a scene of indescribable majesty and grandeur.' I have myself approached from both quarters mentioned, and, indeed, the majesty of this remarkable range can hardly be overstated, the loftiest peaks of which, owing to their vast altitude, are covered with a veil of perpetual snow. We crossed about the same time of the year Mr. Maundrell did—early in May—therefore I am able to endorse his statement, that deep snow covered their heights. Indeed, from the, in some parts, unbroken whiteness, I am inclined to think the snow must have been of very great depth, while in the plains below the sun was scorching. Dr. Clarke, in July, saw some of the summits thickly covered 'with that perfectly white, smooth, and velvet-like appearance which snow only exhibits when it is very deep; a striking spectacle in such a climate, when the beholder, seeking protection from a burning sun, almost considers the firmament on fire.' The temperature of these mountains changes with the altitude, and is so various, that the Arabian poets say, 'Lebanon bears winter on his head, spring upon his shoulders, and autumn in his bosom, while summer lies sleeping at his feet.' I think the fact of perpetual snow is well proven, when we learn that Sir Frederick Henniker passed over snow in July here, as also did Dr. Clarke, and Ali Bey describes the eastern ridge as covered with snow in September. In the last part of April, when crossing on my way to Damascus, I alighted from the diligence and gathered snow in my hand, and when returning early in May, there had apparently been in the meanwhile a fresh fall. I had no opportunity of seeing the Cedars of Lebanon, and my knowledge of them is consequently only theoretical.

A messmate of mine, a few years ago, when out here, was more fortunate and reached them. Lebanon was once covered with cedars and pines; but it was predicted 'that its branches should fall, its cedars be devoured, and that a time should come when its trees should be "so few that a child might write them."' For 800 years afterwards trees covered Lebanon, nevertheless by degrees the prophecy has been fulfilled, and the remaining number of 'the cedars' is, I understand, but seven. Scripture is ever unerring and its prophecies fail not; and deeply indeed is this impressed upon the mind of one who travels in Syria and Palestine. The place where the cedars are stationed is on a plain high up in the mountain, but below perpetual snow; for, if I understand correctly, my friend visited them when there was no snow there. The tree somewhat resembles the pine in its leaves, cone, and bark. From the full-grown ones a clear transparent liquid runs, without an incision being made. I suppose it to be a kind of gum, as when it dries it hardens. The plain where the trees are is a league in circumference, on one side of which is a frightful precipice. The circumference of them, according to D'Arvieux, is thirty-six feet; and Maundrell says, one that he measured was thirty-six feet six inches. The age to which the tree lives is said to be about 1,000 years; that they take 300 years to arrive at maturity, and remain in their prime 300 years more, and occupy the same time in declension. Mr. Maundrell, who measured one of these trees, states, that at six yards from the ground it was divided into five limbs, each equal to a great tree. Dr. Bannister quotes from a traveller who at another time of the year attempted to reach the little grove. He says, above the cascade and the snow, immense fields of ice undulate like vapours of alternate green and blue. To the left, he sees a large black spot on the snow, which turns out to be the renowned cedars, but he and his companions were

unable to reach nearer to them than 500 or 600 yards, for the horses sank up to their shoulders.

The seven giant trees are the only remaining natural monuments of a once, it may be, immense forest which covered this mountain, and even their reduced number promises to be still more reduced. They are gradually dying away. These are the remains of those trees celebrated repeatedly in Holy Writ. Some of them are, I understand, much disfigured by travellers carving their names on their barks—some of the old ones being covered with the names of persons who have visited them, some of which are dated as far back as 1640. Ezekiel's (xvii. 3) parable of the two eagles alludes to one of them as 'A great eagle with great wings, long wings full of feathers, which had divers colours, came unto Lebanon, and took the highest branch of the cedar;' so, perhaps, we may conclude that this forest was the resort of eagles, and also that these lofty summits were haunted by lions and other beasts of prey; indeed, Mr. Maundrell affirmed that he observed the prints of their feet in the snow. In former years, there is no doubt that these lofty heights were the resort of wild beasts. There is an allusion to the same in the prophet Habakkuk's prediction (ii. 17)—'For the violence of Lebanon shall cover thee, and the spoil of beasts which made them afraid, because of men's blood, and for the violence of the land.' Also, again in Solomon's Song (iv. 8)—'Come with me from Lebanon, my spouse, with me from Lebanon: look from the top of Amana, from the top of Shenir and Hermon, from the lions' dens, and from the mountains of the leopards.' To one who has travelled over the rocky heights of both Lebanon's lofty summits, the boast of the haughty monarch Sennacherib seems something beyond an idle threat; but unless there were roads among the dangerous passes and precipices as good as the one by which we travelled, and this is *hardly* likely,

I think, nothing of the nature referred to could have possibly occurred; but perchance he wished to awe Hezekiah when he thus exclaimed—'By the multitude of my chariots am I come up to the height of the mountains, to the sides of Lebanon; and I will cut down the tall cedars thereof, and the choice fir trees thereof: and I will enter into the height of his border, and the forest of his Carmel.' (Isa. xxxvii. 24.) How, pray, could chariots go where man can hardly travel with safety on foot, and where even the sure-footed mule can barely pass? But, as Paxton has it—'Surrounded by crouching slaves, and accustomed to see every obstacle vanish before him, he vainly supposed he could gratify the most inordinate desire; and that what the world called physical impossibilities must yield to his powers.' If he attempted such an expedition, perhaps both he and most of his followers would have met the same dreadful fate as some years ago did the late legate from the Pope to the Maronites, who was hurled down one of the precipices by a false step of his horse.

In discussing and attempting to describe Lebanon, Hermon should be included. It is one, if not the loftiest summit of Anti-Libanus, and at its base the sources of the Jordan spring. Viewing it from the Lebanon range across the plains of Cœle Syria, it appears as if it were a separate mountain. When I crossed the two ranges in May, about 1,000 feet if not more of the mountain was covered with a thick carpet of snow. Dr. Thompson mentions having seen this mountain from the Dead Sea. I did not observe it at that distance myself, as I did not look out for it, but one of our party, the French instructor, saw its white peak towering to the sky on its being pointed out to him by a guide when down at the Dead Sea. In Deut. iii. 9, we find it was called by two other names; namely, 'Hermon the Sidonians call Sirion; and the Amorites call it Shenir.' It has also been called the mountain of snow. That part of the moun-

tain overlooking Banias (Cæsarea Philippi) was formerly called Baal-Hermon, so named after the god Baal. Groves used to be planted and altars erected in honour of this god on high mountains. Mount Hermon was one of the 'high places of Baal,' so often spoken of in Scripture. In Ps. cxxxiii. 3, we read—'As the dew of Hermon, and as the dew that descended upon the mountains of Zion.' This Zion, I take it, is a contraction of Sirion, and not the Mount Zion of Jerusalem. Mr. Maundrell mentions that his party, when encamped on Mount Hermon, were forcibly reminded of the 'dew of Hermon,' their tents being as wet with it as if it had rained all night. The Hermon spoken of by the Psalmist (Ps. lxxxix. 12) is a mount of lower elevation situated at no great distance from Tabor on the plains of Esdraelon.

The inhabitants of these grand and stupendous mountains are said to number about 400,000, congregated 'together in more than six hundred towns, villages, and hamlets, which nestle among the crooks, crannies, and crevasses of the wooded and cultivated slopes of the hills which, heaped together, form the mountain.' The largest town of Lebanon, Zahleh, contains about 11,000 inhabitants. The Druses and Maronites constitute the largest portion of the inhabitants, and live in great enmity with each other. The most compact body occupy the southern range of Lebanon, extending to Hermon and out into the Houran. They possibly number about 80,000 in the mountains alone, while some 20,000 or 30,000 more are scattered about elsewhere. They hold *exclusive possession* of forty towns and villages, and share with the Maronites about two hundred more; while eighty villages in other parts of Lebanon are peopled by them. Quarrels between the Maronites and Druses are of frequent occurrence, and in 1860 the latter massacred large numbers of the former. The outbreak was ultimately quelled by the French and Turkish troops. The

Maronites, whose home is chiefly in Lebanon, far outnumber the Druses, and may be estimated at about 200,000.

I have been lately reading the Rev. J. L. Porter's valuable work, 'Five Years in Damascus.' He gives much information respecting the various religious creeds of the sects of Syria and Palestine, and as the Editor of 'The Land and the Book' in a foot-note quotes from him in a condensed form, it will not be out of place, perhaps, if I also do the same, finding far more information there than my short stay in Damascus or other parts of Syria enabled me to pick up, although I had the good fortune of meeting with a gentleman, long resident, who was brim-full of information.

'I. The Mahometans or Moslems. Under this general head may be classed:—1. The Sonnites (Sunites), traditionists, or orthodox Mahometans, who, besides the written Koran, acknowledge the authority of the Sonna, a collection of traditional sayings and anecdotes of Mahomet. 2. The Metawileh (sing., Mutawaly), followers of Aly, son-in-law of Mahomet, whom they deem the true Iman, rejecters of the Sonna, allied in faith to the Shi-ites of Persia, and very scrupulous as to distinctions between clean and unclean. 3. The Nusairieyeh, or Ausairiyeh, but their religion is a secret—something, perhaps, between Mahometanism and Christianity. 4. The Ismailieyeh, whose religion is also a mystery—originally a sect of Shi-ites, and descendants of "the Assassins" in the time of the Crusades.

'II. The Druses. The origin of this sect is remarkable, and their tenets and modes of worship are kept as secret as possible. Hakim, an Egyptian, gave himself out to be a prophet, and in the eleventh century one of his followers, expelled from Egypt, took refuge at the western base of Mount Hermon, and became the founder of the Druses. They believe in the unity of God, in the manifestation of God in the person of several individuals, the last of whom

was Hakim. They believe also in the constant existence of five superior spiritual ministers, of whom Hamza and Christ were the greatest. Their religion, they hold, shall one day be triumphant, and Hakim shall reign in person. The transmigration of souls is one of their tenets. They meet in their chapels every Thursday evening, but what passes is unknown. It is believed that they are fully more a political than a religious sect. They are very united, and very fierce in war. They are accommodating in religion, and have even offered to become Christians, in order to obtain the protection of this country. They are of two classes—the Okkal, or initiated, and the Juhhal, or ignorant.

'III. The Christians. A full account of the native Christians will be found in Wilson's "Lands of the Bible." They are divided into several sects:—1. The Greeks, so called because connected with the Greek or Oriental Church, all natives of Syria. There are two patriarchates —Antioch and Jerusalem, and sixteen bishoprics. The priests must be married men. 2. The Syrians or Jacobites, a sect separated from the Greek Church on account of the Monophysite heresy. Their service is in Syriac, their number is very small. 3. Maronites. This sect originated in the Monotholitic controversy in the seventh century. Their founder was John Maron. In A.D. 1180 they renounced their heresy, and acknowledged the Pope. They are still in connection with Rome, but have service in Syriac. Their candidates for priesthood may marry before ordination. The Maronites swarm on Lebanon. There are eighty-two convents on Lebanon, with two thousand monks and nuns, and a revenue of 70,000*l.* a-year. The Maronites are the hereditary foes of the Druses. 4. Greek Catholics and Syrian Catholics. These are proselytes whom Romish priests and Jesuits have gained over during the last two centuries. The sect embraces a number of wealthy native Christians, and is influential in Syria.

'IV. The Jews. In Damascus and Aleppo many are natives, and wealthy—Arabs in all but religion. In Palestine the Jews are all foreigners, natives of various countries.

'V. The Turks. These are very few in number, but occupy all the highest situations, and are the scourges of the land.'

I am fully aware of the deep value of these notes, and the long time and labour it must have caused Mr. Porter to have obtained the information, as well as the tedious research—consequently, I have transcribed them.

I think, now that we are a little bit better acquainted with the mountains we are about to cross, we will continue our journeying—the last in Syria, before being homeward bound; and although we had been away from England considerably less than one year, there were those amongst us who were almost as anxious to go home as if they had been a commission of three years away, but then we must make allowance for married men with wives and families. Before continuing my own journeyings, I will here lay before my readers the very interesting account of the adventures of the mounted party of officers that preceded me. The story is written by Lieutenant Palmer, who most kindly at my desire undertook to fill up the vacuum, which for me to do, not having been of the number, would have been altogether impossible, and without which our book would have been far from as complete as I should desire. However, as it now is, I am able to present both accounts—the one journey on horseback, as well as the other more novel way for this part of the country, viz. by diligence to the most ancient city of Damascus. Possibly myself and friend may in some minor points be found to differ in the description of Damascus, but I think as a rule no two travellers ever see things in one and the same light.

FROM BEYROUT TO DAMASCUS, BAALBEC, AND BACK.

By Cecil B. Palmer, Lieut. R.N., H.M.S. Trafalgar.

CHAPTER III.

Having been asked by the author of this book to write a short account of our trip to Damascus and Baalbec, I shall attempt to do so, having at the same time a full estimation of my own incapability, but as I only do this to oblige a friend, and as, otherwise, the very last thing I should think of taking to would be authorship, I hope an indulgent public will make all allowances for me. I shall not attempt any description of Beyrout or a full one of Damascus, as the author himself was at both those places for a much longer period than I was, and is therefore much better able to describe them than I, and beyond, therefore, a few passing remarks, I shall leave them to him.

We arrived at Beyrout from Haifa (Mount Carmel) in H.M.S. 'Trafalgar,' on the evening of April 26, and having obtained the requisite leave for visiting Damascus and Baalbec, the commander and six of the officers of the ship determined to avail themselves of the opportunity, offering at the same time to take in their party a limited number of the cadets, thirteen of whom took advantage of the offer, making in all a party of twenty.

A dragoman, named Timoleon, was engaged the same evening, and came off next morning to settle particulars. He agreed to provide us with horses, tents, &c., and to take us to Damascus, Baalbec, and back in seven days, for which we were to pay 7*l.* 10*s.* a head, which we at first thought rather exorbitant, as the party with whom I went to Jerusalem only paid 6*l.* 8*s.* for eight days, but we came to the conclusion afterwards that the better food,

horses, tents, &c., quite made up the extra money. Having arranged with the dragoman (whom I shall hereafter call Tim, for shortness, that being the name he went by amongst us), we agreed to rendezvous at the hotel at one o'clock, when we would have luncheon ready, and start at two. Two or three of us went ashore at once and passed the time in providing ourselves with whips to keep off dogs and beggars, and such like vermin, and spurs for refractory horses, and that most essential article to a traveller, pipes and 'baccy, and by playing billiards on the most execrable table on record, after which we returned to the hotel, where we found most of the party assembled. We were sorry to find then that, though he had come ashore determined to make a trial of going, one of our party, the commander, was very unwell, and feared he might not be able to get through the journey; however, we hoped for the best. The luncheon, of course, as usual on such occasions, was not ready, nor likely to be so at the appointed time, so we had to amuse ourselves as best we could for some time to come. Whilst we were waiting, the hotel keeper, who happened to be Tim's father, told us he had got the horses outside, and asked us to come out and see his arrangements. I accordingly went out to a sort of green at the back of the house, where I found most of the horses waiting. On going out to look at them I found some seven or eight of the youngsters choosing their horses, some examining them with the eye of a connoisseur and others riding about trying the animals. I went up to one whom I saw riding what appeared to be about the best horse of the party, and asked him if that was the horse he intended to ride. 'Oh yes,' he said, 'I shall have this if I don't happen to see a better.' Now, considering that the party was of our arranging, and that they were only there by our consent, the unblushing brass of the answer fairly took me aback; however, I said nothing,

though I plainly saw that, as the others were much in the same way of thinking, we should be badly off for mounts if we left it to them to choose as they pleased; and as I myself rode about fourteen stone, I had visions of walking after the first twenty miles, which didn't at all suit my book; so having spoken to another of the party we gave Tim a hint, and he forthwith sallied out and picked out the seven best horses of the lot, and our youthful friends were, much to their astonishment and mortification, turned off the backs of the animals that they so fondly hoped were to carry them to Baalbec and back.

At length, having had our lunch, we all got mounted and about three o'clock we started. We were a motley looking crowd, in every kind of get-up imaginable, half-sportsman, half naval officer, with a sprinkling of the Southern planter in the shape of broad-leaved straw hats, &c., one of which I wore myself, a very fine plaited Panama straw, given me out in the West Indies, and which I found a great comfort. One gentleman, a stoutly-built personage, had you merely seen his lower extremities, clad in well-fitting breeches, patent leather boots with white tops, and nicely polished hunting spurs, you would have thought he was going to the crack meet of the season, got up for captivation; but his rough pepper-and-salt shooting coat, in place of a well-fitting pink, rather dispelled the illusion; and to go a little higher, had you only seen his head above the top of a wall, you would have taken him for an Arab sheikh at least, he having a many-coloured silk handkerchief tied round his head with a coil of rope, after the Bedouin fashion. But the most amusing item in the party was one of the youngsters. Measuring about four feet high and small in proportion, perched upon the top of the biggest animal in the troop, the said beast having much the appearance of a cross between Rosinante and a camel, and which he ceased not to belabour from the time of

leaving until our return, his small arm going like a flail, and probably inflicting upon his beast about as much punishment as a flea might do; and as he insisted upon racing every one in the party, and was invariably beaten, his anger was most ludicrous, as he clenched his small teeth and walloped away harder than ever; and, to add to his general absurd appearance, he had no bridle but merely a halter, so the animal did much what he pleased, his rider's attempts to control his motions being perfectly futile, and he would occasionally stop altogether and commence to feed placidly, totally regardless of his rider's tugs at the aforesaid halter, until some one else took compassion on him, and a smart cut with a whip behind would wake him up, when he would proceed on his journey. Altogether this youthful gentleman afforded us infinite amusement to the end of the chapter. Of course, every one was grumbling at his mount; in fact, I fancy I was the only one satisfied, having obtained a beautiful little Arab, very nearly thoroughbred, which carried me splendidly to the end of the trip, notwithstanding hard work and scarcely any food, for the dragomen invariably starve the horses, as they do not belong to themselves, but are merely hired for the journey, and they don't care twopence what becomes of them as long as they last out the journey; they very often defeat themselves, however, as the horses break down on the road and they have to buy others. One gentleman, who had taken his horse on my recommendation, had not ceased to abuse my knowledge of horseflesh since we left; but I stuck to my opinion, and it eventually proved right. His horse was a strong, hardy-looking cob, not very big, but with good shoulders and hind quarters, and altogether looking likely to last well; in fact, much the style of a country farmer's cob, and the gentleman himself, riding in a red cap, with a small blue tuft on top, had much the appearance of a country farmer going round his fields in the

early morning with his night-cap on, having been too sleepy to exchange it for a hat. Now, having given some idea of what our party was like when mounted, I will proceed on our first day's journey. We reached the outside of the town without any mishap and found ourselves on the Damascus road, a road made by the French soldiers about two years ago, and we were surprised to find it such an excellent one, for, with the exception of the asphalte roads of Paris, I never remember to have seen a better; it was like riding on a deal plank the whole way to Damascus. I did not believe before that there existed such a road in the whole Turkish dominions, nor would there, had it not been made by foreigners, whose influence one sees on all sides in and around Beyrout. The country, as we got outside the town, was extremely fertile and pretty, and a good deal cultivated, forming in that way a great contrast to the other parts of Syria which we had visited, which were for the most part very barren, and most monotonous and tiring to travel through. After having ridden for about two miles we were obliged to stop as the commander was getting worse, so we accordingly pulled up at a wayside café where we smoked narghilés and drank coffee (a few I am afraid something stronger) for about half an hour. As with some it was their first trial at this peculiar kind of pipe, the attempts to smoke them, combined with any amount of coughing and choking, were rather ludicrous. However, in a short time we again mounted amid a great deal of wrangling and noise, as it was discovered that some of the horses had smelt out some freshly cut grass which the proprieter of the café had had cut for some purpose, and the consequence was that the sorra a bit of it was left at all, and strange to say the poor man wanted to be paid; whether he was or not I am unable to state as I did not wait to see; well, I hope for his sake he was, but I'm rather afraid he was not. In a short time we found the

mist was coming on very thick and we could hardly see our way. We were now a good height above the level of the sea and the road wound along the side of the mountain, but after a bit the mist began to clear off and we could see down into the valley below and out towards the top of the mountains of the Lebanon range on our left, and just now burst upon our view one of the most beautiful sights it has ever been my good fortune to witness. It was close upon sunset, and over the tops of some of the mountains large dark masses of clouds were rolling, when suddenly, as we turned the corner, the mist was all cleared away and the whole sky and sides of the mountains and the edges of the clouds were illumined with the most magnificent golden light I ever saw. The colour is beyond description, and the contrast between the very dark clouds and this wonderful flood of gold all combined to form one of the most glorious effects I suppose it has ever been the lot of man to witness. I have seen sunsets in the tropics and all over the world, but I never saw anything to equal it.

Just about this time we came up with our baggage train, which consisted of a long string of mules, with the tents and boxes containing our food, furniture, and cooking utensils, all with strings of bells jangling round their necks, and the Union Jack flying over all on a staff fixed upon one of the mule's backs. The drivers were howling, the bells jangling, the tents and boxes rattling, and the *tout ensemble* making a most hideous and discordant row, which we were glad to escape from.

At length about seven o'clock we reached the place where our first encampment was to be made, and our baggage train proceeded to pitch the tents, which they soon did amidst a great deal of noise, and then proceeded to cook our dinner. In the meanwhile I proceeded to take the saddle and bridle off, and groom my horse with a wisp of

straw, knowing well from experience that he would not get it otherwise, and he evidently seemed to enjoy it, it being probably rather a novel sensation to him. About eight o'clock our dinner was ready, and we sat down in a long tent, which held us all, to a very decent feed, after which we retired to different tents to finish the evening in a convivial manner. With regard to the tents, I must here mention that the ardour of our youthful friends with respect to their own interests had again to be checked. There was one large tent provided for the five seniors of the party, and on looking into it, the same gentleman whom I before mentioned as having such a neat taste in horseflesh, was discovered quietly installing himself therein, from which he was summarily ejected, much to his disgust; and after this second shock to his feelings he gave up any further attempt as a bad job, and resigned himself placidly to his fate. But for fear that any one on reading this should think that we had any trouble with the youngsters, I may as well say here that, so far from experiencing any difficulty with them, they behaved themselves admirably throughout, doing all in their power to give as little trouble as possible. At length about eleven o'clock the camp was quiet, and we all slept peacefully. I was dreaming sweetly about five the next morning, when I suddenly became sensible that my dinner the previous night had disagreed with me, for my dream was rudely disturbed by my being, as far as I could make out, transported to Pandemonium, with all the inhabitants thereof let loose, and howling simultaneously. However, after about five minutes, I discovered that I was awake, and that it was only Tim's method of calling us; so, ascertaining that it was only his fun, I turned round and proceeded to go to sleep again. Did I say go to sleep again? I must have made a mistake. I meant try to go to sleep again. Not for Joseph! In about a minute his head, together with his right arm, appeared through

the door of the tent with a bell which he proceeded to ring furiously, and alongside him appeared a swarthy face and two arms which held a tin disc and a large piece of wood, which at once proceeded to play an accompaniment, not of chords, but of the most dreadful dischords that ever set Christian teeth on edge, and at the same time they all joined chorus at the top of their voices with: 'Get up, gentlemen, please, get up, get up, get upp, pp. . . . . .' ad lib. Of course they were received with volleys of abuse, couched, I am afraid, not in the most parliamentary language, but we might as well have talked to the tents themselves, and as the only possible way of getting rid of them was to get out of bed and drive them out, the ruffians accomplished their end, for the exertion of getting up and kicking them out quite did away with all desire for sleep. They then began to take the tent down at once, and that necessitated another sally upon them, as we didn't care about dressing in the open air. Having got rid of our tormentors, I then proceeded to go round the other tents and pull all the youngsters out by the leg, on the principle that if I couldn't sleep any longer myself, I did not see why they should; they of course, too, being quite impervious to any kind of noise whatever, the only method of getting them out was by resorting to forcible means such as the above. Having dressed and packed up our things again, we once more proceeded to the mess tent, where we found breakfast ready, consisting, as it always does in that part of the world, of large dishes of omelet, not particularly good bread, and butter made from goats' milk, but still very palatable to hungry people. When we arrived here, however, a dreadful rumour began to be circulated that some of the horses had been stolen during the night, and as Tim said he could not get any more till some way further on, it rather took away our appetites till we knew who were the sufferers. I myself didn't at all approve of losing my little

Arab, and as just then I saw the horses being led past the tent in a string, I looked anxiously out for mine, which I knew I could recognise by his halter, which is always kept on the horses, as it was covered all over with tassels of gaily coloured worsted. At last, when I had almost given him up, he was led past, the last of the string, and I eat my breakfast more comfortably after that. We found, then, that two of the party had lost their horses, and loud as had been their grumbling the day before, it was likely to be louder now, when they found they had to ride mules for some distance, and as it turned out nearly to the end of the day, as Tim failed to get them horses at every place he tried. However, about seven o'clock we managed to get mounted and start, our baggage train being sent on from here straight to the first halting-place between Damascus and Baalbek, as we should not require them in Damascus, where we were to live in the hotel. As we commenced to ascend, we found the air getting gradually colder, and we could see that we should soon be amongst the snow, and I accordingly betook myself to my great coat, which I had detached from the baggage on that account, my usual coat for riding in being a uniform monkey jacket, made of blue flannel, which I found extremely comfortable and cool, but rather too much so in this instance. However, I did not find it half so cold as I expected, although at one time we dismounted beside a large patch of snow about two feet thick; for the thermometer (if we had had one with us) would not have shown less than 45 or 50, I should imagine; still that was a good change, as the temperature on the plains must have been 80 at the very least. At this time we were at about the highest part of our road, as after passing the snow it began to descend into the plain of Buka'a, which divides the Lebanon from the Antilibanus; it is about twelve miles broad, and about sixty long, and is extremely fertile; in fact it is said that cotton could be

grown there, if anyone could be found enterprising enough to try it. The view was very pretty as we rode down the hill, passing on our right a native village built on the side of the hill, the houses of which appeared to consist principally of thatch, which was very broad, spreading out to a distance of six or seven feet all round the walls of the house, which appeared, as far as I could judge, to be made of mud. We could now see the range of Antilibanus on the other side of the plain, the tops covered with snow, which looked very nice and cool, and as the weather now commenced to be very hot, one wished one could be transported there, though probably had that happened, one would have wished oneself back again; such is the perversity of human nature. About this part, too, I and some others amused ourselves by taking short cuts, as the road wound backwards and forwards a good deal; but I proved the truth of the saying that the longest way round is the shortest way there; for when some way up the hill, I caught up one of the unfortunates who was riding a mule, and passed him, but through my short cuts. When I got to the bottom I found he had got down as fast as I had. At the foot of the hill we found the whole party halted for beer at one of the diligence stations, a very pretty little spot, the house by the side of a wood through which ran a river, whose course we followed the best part of our way across the plain, which it wound through, occasionally crossing the road, when it was spanned by very well built bridges of stone. I must explain that the party did not by any means keep together, but some went on ahead, others dropped astern, according as suited their fancy, whilst one or two continned to jog steadily on at the same pace as the dragomen who were riding mules. The youngsters, of course, were continually racing, and galloping about here, there, and everywhere, only stopping to let their horses graze and drink at every stream they came to, in spite of warnings that a long ride

was before them, and that they were going the right way to make their horses break down on the road. One of them, in particular, in spite of repeated warnings on my part, and also of others, and reiterated prophecies as to the result, performed the journey as long as his horse lasted, in incessant galloping from water to water. He would fly away ahead, all legs and wings (he had only been on a horse once before), bumping up and down on his horse like an india-rubber ball, arms high in the air, hat on the back of his head, and an expression of supreme contentment and enjoyment on his face, flogging away at his horse like a steam threshing machine. Presently he would come to a stream, when he would pull up, his animal streaming with perspiration, and ride him into it, and let him drink buckets full, and when the horse had had enough, which you may be sure was not till he was full and running over at the brim, off he would go again, clatter, clatter, bang, the water going slish slosh inside the animal, like a patent churn, whip going as hard as ever, and legs and arms as before, till he reached the next stream, when the performance was repeated, and so on till his horse cried, hold! enough! which I must say, wonderful to relate, was not till long after it was expected, as he was a light weight, and the horses, I presume, are accustomed to peculiar usage; but I don't think that, in the course of their experience, they could have met with such a peculiar mixture of kindness and blows as they received from the youthful members of our party.

After leaving the diligence station, the road passed between large fields of corn, amongst which quantities of large storks were feeding, and one of the youngsters succeeded in killing one with his stick, but although he wished to carry it and have it skinned, as he had no apparatus, he had eventually to throw it away; but of course, one having succeeded, everyone else wanted to do

the same, and it was most ludicrous to see them all galloping about the fields after the storks, which of course took to flight: much to their astonishment, they apparently expecting them to wait and be knocked on the head. Of course my diminutive young friend, whom I mentioned before as wishing to race everyone, and who went by the name of Toby, was foremost on all these occasions, his old horse lolloping along, and his small, shrill voice sounding behind one occasionally, 'Now I'll race you!' 'I know I can beat you!' &c., which consummation, however, much to his disgust, never came off. His attempts at repartee and chaff, too, on these occasions were very amusing. He was very hard upon me, as I could not resist the temptation of racing and beating him now and then—which was a very simple matter, my horse having the turn of speed of the whole troop—for the sake of watching his face when he found his attempts to go ahead futile. His rage would then vent itself in sarcasm, and he would squeak out, 'Your horse is running away with you, Sir; you can't hold him;' and on another occasion he told me, in a bitter, cutting tone that went to my heart, 'Well! your's is a fearful-looking animal, Sir.' Now, as my horse was decidedly the best looking of the party, this was very hard. However, I managed to survive it. About here some of the youngsters very nearly got into a row for letting their horses eat the corn, which, strange to say, was objected to by the proprietors; but Tim managed to arrange it. About 12 o'clock we halted by the side of the river to lunch. The commander was now so much worse that one of the dragomen was sent to look out for the diligence, which was expected to pass along the road about that time, and in about five minutes' time we saw it coming along—a lumbering machine of French manufacture, such as are still in use in some parts of the south of France, drawn by three horses as wheelers and three mules for the leaders:

it had two divisions in the inside—the coupé and the interieur, and a large kind of tent over the top for the outside passengers. It was hailed, but the answer was that they were quite full, both inside and out, and therefore they did not stop. It was a great disappointment, as we had hoped to get the commander a place in it to take him to Damascus, in which case he would have had a day's rest, and might have been able to get on to Baalbek, whereas now it was feared he would not be able to reach Damascus that night, which subsequently proved to be the case, as he had to stop at the next diligence station, at the foot of the Antilibanus. Our lunch consisted of cold mutton, cold fowls, hard-boiled eggs, and sardines. The mutton was goaty, and the way in which the fowls were dismembered was rather a shock to our nerves. Tim and his assistants picked them up in their fingers, and pulled them to pieces wholesale, and as the aforesaid fingers might have been cleaner, we should have preferred carving them ourselves: but we soon got accustomed to that, and five hours in the saddle, after a not very heavy breakfast, was not calculated to make anyone very fastidious as to what they eat, as long as they got something. After lunch several of us bathed in the river; most of them above the bridge, where the water was slack, but the lower side, where the water came through very rapidly, looked so tempting as it came dashing and tumbling along over a quantity of big stones, that I ventured in there; but no sooner had I put my foot into the water than I turned a complete somersault, very provocative of mirth, and no doubt very amusing for the people on the bank, but anything but agreeable to myself. However, next time I was more careful, and succeeded better, and had a most refreshing bathe; but I found I had cut my foot, which proved the old adage about 'treacherous waters.' I believe there is an old adage about them, but at this moment I don't

recollect it, so I leave you to imagine it; and, when you have done so, to deduce a moral from it. Apart from that, it was annoying, as it prevented me from dismounting and leading my horse to ease him a little, which I wished to do, and which I should recommend anyone else going the same kind of journey to do also, it being a great relief to the horses, and making them go all the better afterwards. About 1 o'clock we all mounted and started again, and in a short time entered the gorge at the foot of the Antilibanus, when we had, much to our regret, to leave the commander behind. We all much wished that one of us should remain behind with him, but this he very generously would not allow, saying that, as he should merely lie down and go to sleep, he should not require anyone; so after leaving one of the dragomen, who spoke French well (which I forgot to mention is the language spoken by almost everyone in the country), with him, we pursued our journey. We were much relieved to find on inquiry here that if we chose to press on, we might reach Damascus by about six o'clock, as we had been expecting from Tim's account not to get in till ten or eleven at the earliest; but that worthy was reckoning by his own standard, and as he was, as I said before, riding a mule, it was very possible that he himself would not arrive before that time. The reason for his misleading us was, that one peculiarity of those gentlemen is, that they cannot bear anyone going faster than themselves, and consequently do all in their power to prevent it, which on occasions where the road is not plain is very sensible; but as on this occasion there was no possibility of mistaking the road, there being no other, it was stupid of him. However, having obtained this information, we all pressed forward, and soon became scattered along the road in twos and threes; some of the youngsters falling behind, as their little eccentricities of the morning began to tell on some of them. One had to stop behind, as he had been

kicked on the knee by one of the horses, and the pain prevented him from going beyond a walk. However, we left him with Tim, with injunctions to him to look after the youngster, and as we knew he was in good hands, we did not scruple to leave him behind. After riding for some little way we came to a place where the old road (which is merely a bridle road) seemed to offer a short cut, and we accordingly took it, with the intention of trying to catch up a party of two or three who were some way ahead, but after a little while the hearts of all except myself failed them, and they struck across to the road again. I, however, being somewhat of a pig-headed nature, said I would stick to the short cut now I had begun, and shortly after passing an Arab village, where the people seemed much inclined to be friendly, salaaming after the fashion of the country, which I had picked up, namely, touching the breast and forehead, I came out on to a beautiful stretch of turf about a quarter of a mile in length, where I had a good stretching gallop, my little horse going like an arm-chair, and which I enjoyed immensely, being the first time I had seen such a thing as turf since leaving England. Shortly after I again came out on the road, finding myself, after all, some way ahead of the others who had eschewed the short cut, thus proving that pig-headedness sometimes answers after all. But a word of advice—Don't take example by this instance, but ever eschew short cuts; they mighty seldom answer in anything, either in riding or other things. I now picked up one of the youngsters, who usually went by the name of Boss—Anglicè, Boss-eye—from the peculiar formation of his visionary organs. He was riding on a Turkish saddle, and without bridle, a meek-looking animal, which puzzled you to discover whether it was horse or cow, but which appeared to go wonderfully well, and together we jogged on at a good pace. The hills here became rather barren, and the scenery uninteresting,

which was an additional incentive to pushing on. We passed several strings of camels and mules, many of whose drivers wished us 'bon voyage;' also some caravans of white-covered waggons, bearing on their tent-like tops the name of a French maker in Lyons, from whence everything they have seems to come. It is curious how the occupation of this part of the country by the French troops ten years ago infused the French element into the place. Everyone almost speaks the language like a native. Everything they have of European manufacture comes from France, and the names of the shops, and on the diligence, &c., all have a French appearance. Even the driver himself, with his long whip, perched upon the box, looks as if he had served his apprenticeship in the south of France; about Pau and the Pyrenees, where they still run. After riding for about an hour, we suddenly, to our astonishment, on turning a bend in the gorge, saw the diligence only a very short way ahead of us, with the party we had been trying to overtake riding behind it. As the diligence was a good hour ahead of us at one o'clock (it was now about a quarter to five), we must have come along well. We put our horses to a canter, and soon caught it up, and in about five minutes we descended with it into the desert of Sahara, through which the road runs in an apparently interminable straight line for about five miles. As we soon got tired of that, we once more put our horses into a gallop, and, leaving the diligence, and the four others of our party who were with it, behind, we entered, about half past five, the gorge through which the Abana flows right up to Damascus. It is thickly wooded with poplar and walnut trees, and is most beautiful, and a most delightful change from the long, dusty road and the barren desert of Sahara. The change was so sudden that it quite took us by surprise. After riding up this gorge for some little distance, we began to discover, by unmistakable signs, that we were not far from Damascus.

Large numbers of villas lined the road, and we encountered several carriages of European build, the occupants of which, however, were not very European-looking, as of course the men all wore the fez, and the women were, as usual, entirely veiled, not even showing their eyes. A little further on we passed a large building built on the banks of the river, and painted all over with curious designs. We presumed this to be a bathing house, which I found afterwards it was. About half a mile on, the river divided beneath a bridge, which we crossed, and a most peculiar phenomenon took place, which I can find no mention of in any book. The branch on the left-hand side of the road began to ascend, and about half a mile beyond we rode along between the two, that on our right hand being about two feet below the level of the road, and that on the left being about ten or twelve feet above it, the road itself being perfectly level. The bank of this branch nearest the road is built up with large stones to support it, and prevent the water from breaking out across the road, but the bed itself is entirely natural, and the water flows in this way entirely of its own accord, and with apparently no cause for it. What becomes of this left-hand branch afterwards I am unable to say, but I believe it finds its way into the Abana again, by means of some fall, but we lost sight of it by its branching off into the woods, and we did not see it again. I inquired, but could get no definite information about it. About six o'clock we rode out of the gorge on to the plain of Bagdad, but we could not yet see Damascus, though we were close to it, as the approaches are very thickly wooded; but after riding some little way up an avenue of walnut trees, we caught a sight of the minarets of the oldest and most beautiful city in the world. We shortly afterwards emerged from the trees on to a large common outside the walls of the city, which was covered with horses and encampments of the people who had brought them in from

the surrounding country, as there is a great market for horses at Damascus, and I was informed that one could purchase a really very decent horse for about four pounds. We rode across this common at full gallop, cracking our whips, &c., and altogether making great idiots of ourselves, much to the astonishment of the people we met on the road; but we were in great spirits at reaching the end of our long and tiring ride. We turned to the right over a little wooden bridge, and entered the city through a low archway, and at once inquired for the Locanda Dimitri, the hotel to which we were bound, which we very shortly reached. The outside appearance was not prepossessing, being dirty-looking, and the entrance a little bit of a door that we had to stoop to enter; but the interior was an agreeable surprise. We entered first a small ante-room, with a small tank of water in the middle, and seats all round it; and then, through a door, we came out into a large open court, with a much larger tank in the centre, into which several taps kept discharging water. All round this tank, and interspersed about the court, were large orange trees in tubs, which formed a very pleasant shade to sit under in the daytime, besides looking green and pleasant at any time. At one end of the court was a kind of raised daïs, with a roof over it, and on this was a table and sofas, &c., where the people stopping in the house could lounge and smoke, &c. Some iced lemonade and a tub proved very acceptable after the dust and heat of the journey, after which we were quite ready for dinner, but we had to wait till the arrival of the rest of the party. The four whom we left riding with the diligence came in about half-past six, about half an hour after us, they having ridden in with the diligence, and by about half-past seven or eight the best part of the party had turned up. The youngster who was hurt did not fetch in till one in the morning, but we were happy to find him almost right the next morning, and quite able

to get about the city on foot. Our dinner was rather late, and as we were all tired we went to bed pretty early. The hotel keeper was rather dismayed when I told him there were nineteen of us going to arrive in the course of the evening, and at first said he had not room, but I told him that was all bosh, and he must find room somewhere, which he eventually did, by putting a quantity into one large room which opened off the centre court. I now discovered that the country farmer had at last found out the good qualities of his nag, he having come in the last twelve miles at a swinging trot, which made the others who were with him gallop to keep up, and which pace he kept to the whole of the last two hours without stopping at all, and he accordingly apologised for abusing my judgment before.

CHAPTER IV.

LIEUT. PALMER'S NARRATIVE—*continued.*

We were rather late in turning out next morning, owing to the fatigue of the day before; but after breakfast and a smoke, about 11 o'clock we prepared to start under the guidance of Lewis (our second dragoman, or rather head waiter), a very intelligent fellow, and who proved himself very obliging and useful in bargaining with the old thieves who kept the bazaars. Just as we were starting, we were agreeably surprised by seeing the commander ride in; he had started from the diligence station at two in the morning, and though still very seedy had managed to get in without stopping again—but as he had to go to bed at once, we saw him no more before we started the next morning.

We now set out under Lewis's guidance to visit the city, our steps being first turned towards the silk merchants'

bazaars, where we made several purchases, in the shape of Burnous, silk handkerchiefs of all colours of the rainbow, sashes, &c., &c. The appearance of these bazaars was most picturesque. The street in which those which we visited lay was broad and spanned by high arches, through crack and crannies in which the light occasionally found its way, throwing fantastic shadows on the ground, which was itself better than that of any other Turkish town we had visited, being smooth and comparatively clean, instead of being paved with large rough stones, which nearly broke your ankles in walking over them, as well as being covered with filth a foot deep. The stalls, ranged along each side of the street with their gaily coloured silks displayed, with here and there an odd stall with old weapons, amber mouth-pieces, &c., in them; and in every one the inevitable grave, bearded, turbaned, and solemn looking old thief, looking as if butter wouldn't melt in his mouth, and asking as the price of his goods, with an air of martyrdom, only about seven times their value, were certainly eminently picturesque, and came better up to one's ideal of an Eastern scene than anything I had before witnessed, for I had up to this time been a trifle disappointed in Eastern towns, having found them dirty and shabby, without any colour to relieve them; but Damascus was vastly different, and the motley crowds of every nation under the sun, which filled the bazaars, added considerably to the picture. Turks, Arabs, Persians, Armenians, and occasionally Europeans, Mohammedans, Christians, of all sizes, ages, sexes, and colours, crowding and jostling each other, and us too; but Lewis was not particular as to who he shoved out of the way as he made way for us along the street, so we managed to get along pretty well. Strings of mules, too, with panniers on their backs, filled generally with oranges and fruit, were passing through the crowd, whilst every now and then, without the slightest warning

of any kind, one would feel the hot and noisome breath of a camel on one's cheek, as he came pacing soberly and steadily along, perfectly silent, and getting out of nobody's way, but going straight on with no respect for persons, so that one has a very fair chance of being walked quietly over without knowing it, which I very nearly was two or three times, whilst standing still looking at the bazaars. After finishing our purchases amongst the silk merchants, we proceeded to the narghilé makers' bazaar, which I thought almost the brightest and prettiest street in the city. The narghilés made here are the old type, a cocoa-nut shell, or in the more expensive ones, an ostrich egg, enclosed in two little bowls of brass, one at the top and one at the bottom, with two holes cut in them, one exactly in the centre of the top into which is fitted a long wooden tube, turned and ornamented all the way up; and the other about two inches on one side, into which the wooden stem for smoking it is fixed diagonally. On the top of the first tube a bowl is made to fit to contain the tobacco, which curiously enough has to be soaked in water before lighting it. To smoke it, the shell is first filled with water, the tobacco wetted and kneaded in the hand, and a piece of charcoal from the nearest fire placed on the tobacco, when the pipe is ready. I invested in one, and found I much preferred them to the glass ones more generally in use, and as long as I had Lewis to get it ready for me, and all I had to do was to smoke it, I used it a good deal; but I found it was altogether too much trouble when all the preparations had to be made by oneself.

It being now about time for lunch we retraced our steps to the hotel. After lunch, whilst we were lounging about waiting to go out again, we were of course beset by fellows of every description with swords, daggers, sashes, pipes, photographs, &c., &c.; but they did not make much out of us, as we preferred waiting to get anything we wanted at

the bazaars, where, with Lewis's help, we hoped to pay only double or treble the value of the articles, instead of six or seven times. The way Lewis bargained with the old ruffians squatting up on their counters, was most amusing. He would pooh-pooh them one minute, soft sawder them the next; and after beating them down a good bit, he would end by forcibly taking possession of the article, giving them at the same time about one-third of the money originally asked. Any remonstrance attempted on their part he would take as a personal insult to himself, giving vent to such a torrent of abuse in Arabic, and looking so uncommonly pugilistic, that the merchants generally subsided, thinking themselves, no doubt, very hardly used at not being allowed to cheat the dogs of Christians as much as they could wish. But the way he obtained the narghilés for us was most amusing. After bargaining for some time, he thrust the narghilés back upon the astonished man, saying he would have nothing; at the same time forcibly carrying us off, much to my disgust, as I had made up my mind to be cheated to a certain extent, and was just about to buy one I had taken rather a fancy to. But when we got back to the hotel, he asked me how much I was willing to give, and having told him, off he went to the man, telling him quietly that he was a friend of his and did not like to see us go away without buying something of him, but that he could not induce us to give more than a certain sum, and the consequence was, that the man was completely bamboozled, and gave him the Narghilé about six or seven francs cheaper than his 'last price.'

About three o'clock we again started, this time to see the Grand Mosque and other parts of the city. He showed us the street called Straight, spoken of in Holy Writ as the street in which Judas lived, to whose house St. Paul was taken after his conversion. Our time was so short that we

were not able to inspect his house, which, together with that of Ananias, and the window from which St. Paul was let down in a basket, form the principal objects of interest, connected with Scripture, to be seen in Damascus. We then went to the silversmiths' bazaar, a large covered place, with rows of bearded workmen hammering away behind their little furnaces. I was much disappointed with the workmanship, which I thought very poor, and as it was chiefly filigree work, I did not feel the least tempted to spend any money here, being able to get that kind of work infinitely better at Malta. The jewels which they used too were very inferior, and execrably set. A quantity of small swarthy vagabonds came and offered us packets of unset turquoises for two and three francs, but they were not worth even that price, being of a very pale and washy colour. The heat in here was intolerable, so as soon as we had seen what there was to be seen we were very glad to get out. We then went on to the shoe-makers' bazaar, where we saw them making the small-curved red slippers which everyone wore, and the ornamented patterns inlaid with mother-of-pearl and fancy woods, something like Madeira work, which are much worn by the women. We now wended our way beneath lofty arcades, and between rows of gaily decked shops with every kind of merchandise displayed, Manchester prints, silks, French ribbons hanging in parti-coloured streamers from projecting rollers above the stalls, fathoms of flexible pipe stems, saddlery, articles of husbandry, weapons, antique armour, &c.; in fact almost everything was displayed here. At this juncture a tremendous rattling and clinking of glass and crockery was heard behind us, which on looking round proved to be a lemonade seller, with his large glass bottle full of a refreshing looking liquid with lumps of ice floating about in it, which we of course all clamoured for at once, and which, though rather too sweet, was very accept-

able in our present heated condition. It certainly was not expensive, for a coin about the value of sixpence paid for the whole party, which, considering the ice, and the lemons, and the sugar, and also the fact that he must have cheated us into the bargain, if it was only a small amount, did not ruin us. We now got clear of the bazaars, and the streets became smaller and dirtier, and in a short time we found ourselves in the Jews' quarter, where we obtained admittance to two of the houses. In the first, which was the house of a rich banker, there was a kind of chapel in which a quantity of Jews were sitting round on a raised daïs, whilst one of the party read from the Talmud in a shrill, high-pitched, sing-song voice, anything but pleasant to hear. The men all looked dirty and greasy, their faces of course displaying the Jewish type very strongly in long, thin, hooked, and pointed noses. They all wore two long greasy-looking curls, one on each side of the face. The Pharisees were to be distinguished by their long black robes, trimmed with fur, and black velvet caps with a broad edging of fur also. They were very civil and beckoned to us to come up on the daïs, but as I could not conveniently take off my boots I hesitated; but they waived that at once, saying, never mind, and so we all went up. They then showed us their old manuscript copies of the Talmud, which were preserved in cylindrical-shaped silver cases, made in two halves, with a hinge fitted on one side, and the manuscript rolled up round two spindles, one in each half of the box, so that when opened the parchment ran across from one side to the other, and when they wished to read it, it was wound up on one side and unwound the other. We then went out into the courtyard in the middle of the house, out of which all the rooms open, there being no communication from any one room to another except through the courtyard, which generally has a large marble basin and fountain in the centre. The rooms all consist of two parts,

the lower part into which you go on entering, and the upper part which is carpeted, with sofas and cushions round it, where the visitors are entertained; they generally have also a smaller marble basin and fountain at one side. They are most of them very handsomely fitted up with carving, gilding, and fretwork all over the ceilings and round the walls, and those parts of the floor which are not carpeted, inlaid with marble; but the decorations are not always in the best taste, being more gaudy than neat. The women are as a rule handsome, though I do not admire their fashion of shaving off their eyebrows, and painting black arches in their places, which very nearly meet over the bridge of the nose. It possibly improves their eyes, but spoils the *tout ensemble*, as I think that anything natural is infinitely preferable to paint in any shape or form. After leaving this part of the city we went to have a Turkish bath. It was not my first experience in that line; but it was so with one of our party, who appeared to be in a great state of trepidation at the thoughts of the operation. I suppose most of my readers have undergone the aforesaid operation; but for the benefit of those who have not, I will relate my own experiences in that line, on the occasion of my first trial. I entered first into a spacious dome-like apartment, very lofty, and paved with marble, which was wet and slippery. In the centre of this there was a large circular marble tank, with a fountain playing in it, and all round the walls were ranged sofas and couches covered with white, looking much like the beds in a hospital, which effect was considerably heightened by the ghastly appearance of the occupants of the aforesaid couches, who were lying covered over with white cloths, and their heads bound up in others of the same kind, as if they had received a gentle tap there from a sword, or some such other article of domestic furniture. It caused one to fancy for a moment that there was some

mistake, that there had been a deadly engagement with the Arabs outside the town, and that they had unwittingly brought us into a temporary hospital for the wounded troops.

The medicines, however, rather reassured us, narghilés, coffee, and iced lemonade, the former of which certainly did not look like an hospital. Overhead, all round the place, were long lines stretched across from side to side, on which were suspended innumerable towels. These lines being 20 or 30 feet from the ground, the towels have to be thrown up from below, and the dexterous way in which this was accomplished excited my intense admiration. Nothing but years of practice could have possibly imparted to the beggars the sleight of hand with which they rolled the towels up into a little ball, and then throwing them up with a sudden jerk, they caused them to spread out and alight quietly over the line without a wrinkle in them. It was like a conjuring trick. I would have given a sovereign to be able to do it. When required for use they reached them down with a long pole. Meanwhile we were denuded of our garments, and had a towel tied round our waists. We were then told to come down off the platform, which we accordingly did, and stepped on to the slippery marble floor; on doing which I felt an immediate inclination to cause that part of my body, generally used as a cushion, to make acquaintance with the aforesaid floor, which would doubtless have been pleasant and instructive as a warning for the future, but which would at the same time be extremely unpleasant to my feelings, which are sensitive. I was, however, happily saved by an arm, and on turning to see who my preserver was, and if necessary thank him, I very nearly performed the evolution again from fright, for I found myself seized by a hideous swarthy apparition, dressed in the light and airy costume peculiar to those places, a towel, and dripping from every pore. This

monster at once seized me by the arm, put a pair of clogs on my feet, which I experienced great difficulty in keeping on, owing to the fact that I could have comfortably put both feet into one strap, and led me away. I was now getting passively resigned to my fate; I felt convinced I should never come out alive, when, as I turned round to take a last parting glimpse of the world and my fellow-creatures, my eye lighted upon the afore-mentioned hospital patients. A thought flashed across me. Horror! Shall I be like that when I come out? I am afraid it is but too possible; and shall I, a freeborn Briton and a Christian, allow a pack of swarthy infidels and circumcised savages to transmogrify me into a hideous and horrible looking mummy like that? Perish the thought! I will go back at once; no farther for me, not one step, if the termination is to be like that. But I reckoned without my host, my tormentor was bent upon leading me on, and as I knew from experience that, without his aid, I should seek in vain to recross that marble floor in quest of my clothes, without breaking every bone in my body, there was no help for it but to go on, so I once more allowed him to lead me away, my mind being in a semi-state of idiocy, and totally unable to grasp any idea, or to look forward with any degree of calmness and fortitude to what was going to be my fate, when I got through the small door he was leading me to. After passing through, I was conducted through a series of small rooms of gradually increasing temperature, till I reached one where the heat was so great that I could hardly breathe, and placed on a marble slab. I began to feel a kind of suffocation; my head began to swim and my senses to leave me. So they are going to make me insensible first, I thought, before they kill me outright. Well, that's kind of them at all events. I shall ever feel grateful to them for that, and if anyone survives this, and the villains are tried for murder, I wish it to be mentioned, as my last dying request, that it

may be considered in their favour, that they did their best to spare me as much pain as possible.

Such were the thoughts which coursed through my distorted brain, and the words which my lips would have framed, had I been capable of speaking at all, but I was not, so I lay there and awaited my fate with resignation. In the meanwhile, the rest of our party were led in like sheep to the slaughter, and ranged beside me on the slab, rather reminding one of fish laid out side by side in the front of a fishmonger's shop. However, after a time, my senses began to return, and I commenced to breathe more freely, and my mind became reassured, when I found that they had only left us there to moisten (to put it as delicately as possible), which we soon began to do, pretty freely. This being accomplished to their satisfaction, in came the copper-coloured demons, and seized us once more, and led us away again, much against my will, as I now felt a pleasing kind of languor stealing over me, and felt inclined to remain where I was. But there is no rest for the wicked in this world, and I had to go, willy, nilly, whithersoever my attendant demon pleased to lead me. He took me into another room and placed me down beside a marble basin, with a continual stream of hot water kept pouring. There was an individual in another part of the room undergoing a species of torture, which must I am sure be a reminiscence of the barbarous ages of so-called chivalry, when the rack and thumbscrew were in use. His attendant was kneeling on him, pulling his arms and legs nearly out of the sockets, twisting his head first one way and then the other, and finishing him up by placing his arms across his chest, his knees up to his chin, and then forcibly embracing him, and giving him a squeeze such as a grizly bear might give. My terrors commenced to return, and I determined at least to make a struggle for liberty, if they tried on that game. But I was happily spared this, my attendant nymph

contenting himself with kneading me all over and rubbing me down with an instrument something like a coir brush cut off short, and stuck on to the palm of a glove. This operation finished, he proceeded to work up some soap in a tin basin into a tremendous lather, and suddenly and unexpectedly throwing himself upon me, he proceeded to cover me from head to foot with it, without the slightest respect to my eyes, which were immediately filled with soap before I had time to shut them. He then went on to scrub me with the aforesaid brush, laying me down, picking me up again, turning me over on my stomach, throwing my arms about, and altogether treating me as if I was a deal plank, or some such other article that he had been ordered to clean. This was, to say the least of it, derogatory to my dignity, to say nothing of the fact of my feeling, without a doubt upon the subject, that the consummation of my torture was at hand, and that he fully intended to perform that operation I have so often heard talked of, but never yet saw consummated, namely, skinning me alive. How he managed to draw the line so finely as to leave off just at the right moment and not do so, passes my comprehension. But, wonderful as it may seem, he did do so, but for fear I should not be believed without proof, I beg to state that I am alive at the present moment, and can bring witnesses to prove it; and I never yet heard an instance of a man living without his skin. So after being soused up to my neck in a scalding hot pool, which I fully expected led through into the furnaces themselves, and that I should bring up on the coals below, they proceeded to envelop me in the above-mentioned cloths and turban, and having conducted me to the outer hall, which felt so cold on entering that it took away my breath for the second time, though from a different cause, they put me on a divan, and covering me with a sheet left me to dry. There was a looking-glass in the place, and from what I saw

reflected there, I don't think that any amount of money would have been sufficient to induce me to let *her* see me that moment. *She* would never have spoken to me again, and I should have been left a blighted being for the remainder of the term of my natural life. They then provided me with a narghilé and coffee, and I must say I began to feel eminently clean and happy. I should have been perfectly agreeable to remain there for the next hour or two, but there is such a thing as dinner, so after about half an hour's repose, we dressed and wended our way back to the hotel. As this was my second Turkish bath, and the above account is only a reminiscence of the first, I enjoyed it much more, but my experience of Turkish baths is, that the end to be obtained is desirable, as it certainly cleans you, and that the after sensation is decidedly pleasant, but the means to obtain the aforesaid end are, if novel, certainly anything but pleasant. After dinner we sat out under the orange trees in the court, reclining in arm-chairs, smoking our pipes, and talking over the events of the day, varying the entertainment by buying photographs, and trying to bargain with the natives for sundry articles which they brought in, such as swords, armour, &c. One fellow had a sword with rather a fine blade for which he asked, if I recollect right, three pounds ten, so profiting by the experience of the morning, I at once offered him a sovereign for it, at which he professed to be highly indignant, and went away saying he would sell nothing to people who had such a low opinion of his honesty as that. About eleven we all retired to bed, except a few adventurous spirits who went out to hunt dogs by moonlight, and whom we occasionally heard going full cry past the door, their shouts gradually dying away in the distance, only to return again shortly. They were only shouting all together, and not making *very* much noise. Truly the exemplary manner in which the Turkish police keep order

is wonderful. I have not heard that they encountered one of that admirable body in the whole course of their night wanderings, I am sure I saw none during the day. But then they were probably close at hand if they made any more noise. Thus finished our sojourn at Damascus, with which I must say that I was agreeably surprised, for a good many writers run down the inside of the city. I dont say that it comes up to a European town, but I do say that, comparatively with other Turkish towns which we visited, Damascus was a paradise. It was possible to walk the streets at all events, without getting over one's ankles in mud. The street called Straight which our guide Lewis insisted upon calling the Straight-called street, was not much straighter than most other streets that I could see, in fact it had a distinct curve in it, or to quote Mark Twain it was straighter than a corkscrew, and not as straight as a rainbow, and as it was not by any means one of the finest streets in the city there was nothing much in it, except the fact of its being mentioned in Scripture. It was longer than others, that was all.

About six o'clock next morning we woke up, and one of the party who was sleeping in the same room with me, startled us by suddenly informing us that it was half-past eight. Out we tumbled and for ten minutes were in a tremendous state of hurry, thinking we were late, when on looking at my watch I found it was only six. We referred to the waiter who had come in answer to our summons. I found I was right, so I sent for Lewis to light my narghilé and went placidly to bed again. The phenomenon was suddenly explained by the author of the mistake saying, 'I'm sure I don't know why I did it, but I've got a sort of hazy recollection of putting my watch on two hours last night before going to bed.' I make no invidious remarks, but I leave you to form your own opinion of the officer's state the previous night; let us be charitable, and attribute

it to the heat of the sun and the effects of the Turkish bath. By seven o'clock we were dressed and ready for breakfast, when there was a hue and cry from one of the party, the country farmer before mentioned. The whole of the gold he had with him (nine pounds) had disappeared from his waistcoat pocket during the night. He had put his waistcoat in the drawer the previous evening with the money in the pocket, and in the morning, lo and behold the money was gone! how or where no one could discover, and it remains a mystery to us all to this day. The room could not have been more than seventeen feet by twelve. My bed and that of the unfortunate were placed lengthways on each side of the room, with the drawers filling up the space between the heads; opposite the drawers was the door, and beside the door slept the third, so the thief, whoever he was, must have been an old hand at the business. Anyhow the money went, and its manner of going remains shrouded in mystery unto this day. Now I come to think of it, this occurred, not the morning of leaving Damascus, as I have described it, but on the morning after our arrival. But the most peculiar part of it all was, that my watch and purse were lying exposed on the drawers, and yet were untouched in the morning, while the money that went was in a drawer.

After breakfast, about 8 A.M., we were all mounted and ready for another start, when up comes my friend of the previous evening with the sword I had offered him a pound for, and he, finding time was short, and that after once more offering him the original pound, I paid no more attention to him, came rapidly down, and eventually thrust the sword upon me, just as we were starting, using the expressive words, 'Give me money.' Such is the perversity of human nature. Sooner than not sell it, he submitted this morning to having his honesty doubted by a Christian. Oh filthy lucre! filthy lucre! you have a deal to an-

swer for. Tim now gave his mule a vicious kick, and away we started, through the streets of Damascus, towards the hills on the south side of the town, where lay the road we were to take to Baalbek. We soon began to get clear of the houses, and amongst the trees and shrubbery which surround the city, and shortly afterwards, we mounted a rising ground to the left, and found ourselves overlooking the city. Mark Twain mentions a story of Mahomet, who is said to have remarked, on obtaining this view of Damascus, 'A man cannot possibly expect to enter two Paradises, and he preferred the one above,' so he sat down and looked at it, and went away again. I forgive the arch impostor his remark, and moreover applaud him for it, for I consider he was perfectly justified. A more lovely sight than this view of the Pearl of the East on that early Sunday morning, I can never hope to set eyes upon. Behind us and away to the right the lofty mountains, commonly called the White Hills, in front the plain of Bagdad, stretching away for four hundred miles till it reaches the city of Arabian Nights celebrity; over this, as far as the eye can reach, caravans winding along, camels, mules, white-tented waggons, and, sometimes, a few solitary horsemen; and beneath us, nestling amongst masses of luxuriant green foliage, lies the city, with its countless domes and minarets, sometimes half shrouded by poplar, walnut, or plane trees, and all glittering in the morning sun, while from the heart of the city rose the cry of the muezzin calling the people to prayer, and the sound of the Turkish bugles. Add to this that the air was fresh, and that the intense glare of the noonday heat had not yet arisen, and you have the picture, or rather an apology for it, which greeted my astonished eyes, and on which I could have feasted them for hours. But there! if I attempt to describe it any more, I shall tear the whole of this manuscript up in a rage. I am not an author, and I never tried such a thing as writing a book before, and I am

no more competent to describe that glorious picture than John Stuart Mill is to be king of England. If I could only come across a good description of it, I would crib it in a moment. By Jove! hurrah!! here it is, Mark Twain for ever! He describes it as an 'Island of pearls and opals gleaming out of a sea of emeralds.' That is the best and most suitable description I have seen of it; it exactly describes what I thought of it, but could not put into words, and I return my most sincere thanks to my American cousin for putting the words into my mouth. I could have remained where I was for any length of time, but time and tide wait for no man, and neither did Tim, so with many regrets I had to leave the view, and gallop on after the rest of the party, pulling up every now and then to take another look, as a fresh view would burst out from behind a rock or mound. When we got on a little farther, we could see the river meandering through the waving expanse of foliage below, and the carriage road by which we came to Damascus gleaming white here and there through the trees. The road we were travelling at present was certainly a contrast; being slightly stony, with sundry small rocks scattered about promiscuous-like in the path, threatening to cause horse and rider to make acquaintance with Mother Earth, and though the old lady, when you come to know her well, is, doubtless, very pleasant, still one would prefer leaving the introduction to one's own time and convenience. We pass on our right a round-topped hill crowned by a small ruin called the Dome of Victory, and stated by some to be the spot where Mahomet first looked upon Damascus and made the remark before alluded to. On the left, just outside the city walls, we passed an old ruined tower, according to Murray, of ante-Roman origin, and also a tomb with a dome-shaped top, said to be the place where George, the porter who assisted St. Paul's escape, and was martyred for his devotion, was buried. We shortly passed through

the Arab town of Dumnar, and, winding through the chalk hills, entered upon the flinty plain of Sahara. After crossing this, and about two hours' ride from Damascus, we descended into a beautiful glen, amid vineyards and fig orchards, through which ran the Barada, one of the tributaries of the Abana, and which, just above here, is augmented by the remarkable fountain of Fijeh, which is one of, and in fact, the principal source of the Abana. This remarkable fountain bursts from a narrow cave at the foot of a cliff, on the top of which is an old temple, and the mouth of the cave being partly filled up with large stones, the torrent comes out with tremendous force, and a roar like Niagara. This fountain is not, however, the commencement of the river, which rises some way above this. The road now ran for some way along the glen, by a narrow, and in some places, steep and precipitous road, cut in the side of the rock. The hills rising up on our right were chalky, barren cliffs, and rose in some places hundreds of feet above the river, and in one place, the mountain behind is two thousand feet above it. On the other side of the river, and some little way back from the banks, the cliffs rose again some hundreds of feet high, thus forming a ravine hardly more than 300 or 400 yards wide, from cliff to cliff. This is called the Ravine of the Barada. The banks of the river are cultivated in terraces, which were covered with barley, wheat, and oats, all growing indiscriminately together, very thick and almost ready for the sickle. The ravine on each side of the river is thickly wooded with walnut, poplar, plane, cherry, apricot and other fruit trees, which all grow in the greatest luxuriance. The corn is planted all amongst the trunks of the trees, and the whole forms an extraordinary contrast to the barren hills, from the foot of which they are only separated by the width of the road, which barely admits of one horseman at a time. The change is not gradual, but extraordinarily

sudden. The corn, grass, and trees grow right up to the edge of the road; the walnut trees throwing their grateful shade over it, which is very pleasant, shading the traveller from the intense heat of the sun, which is, at times, very trying, and the rocky stony cliffs rising up so close, without a vestige of vegetation, that we could touch them with our hands.

Shortly after passing through an Arab village, we halted upon one of the aforementioned terraces to lunch; a very pretty spot. It was a kind of platform of green turf, overhanging the river, which was rushing and tumbling along beneath us, and the intertwined branches of the walnut trees forming a perfect roof overhead, and completely shading us from the sun. The horses were soon tethered, and the lunch spread out on carpets and rugs, and when finished, three of us set out to bathe. This was rather a perilous undertaking, and required some deliberation and not a little walking before we could find a suitable place, the river being so tremendously rapid that it was next to impossibility to bathe where we were without being swept away. However, after walking along the bank some way, climbing over stiles, getting through hedges, and wading up to our ankles in water, we at last discovered a place suitable for our purpose just above a dam, the water being, of course, slacker. After we had finished our bathe and returned, we found all the rest of the party had gone off, bag and baggage, without us; and as at first there seemed to be no signs of either horses or guide, this appeared awkward, but we shortly found both on the road above, but we discovered at the same time that the rest of the party were about half an hour ahead, and that he (the guide) had been galloping about, hallooing for us ever since, so we at once started off at a canter to catch them up. We soon overtook two of the party, who had seated themselves under a tree by the wayside to wait for us, and we all reposed our-

selves here for a short time and smoked our pipes, and then proceeded; and in about half an hour caught up Tim, and as, just after this, all the party cleverly managed to gallop on about half a mile on the wrong road, we did not lose anything by being behind. We again got behind in the afternoon, and there was a tremendous business about it; the party with Tim crossed the river, and as we did not see them and passed the place for crossing, the whole party stopped the other side and hallooed, Tim firing his pistols, and making enough commotion to bring the place down. About half-past three we again came upon the Barada, now much reduced in size, and running through a gorge in one place not 100 feet from cliff to cliff. On the opposite side we saw a quantity of holes in the rock, and on enquiry found them to be ancient tombs, which we expressed a wish to see, but Tim of course, wanting to get on, told us there was no time. We were, however, not to be discouraged; and three of us determined to make the attempt. There was one drawback though, and that was the absence of any apparent means of getting there. It would have been easy enough, could we have crossed the river there, but it was not fordable, and the only bridge was higher up, and there appeared to be no road there; however, we determined to try. We accordingly rode to the opposite side, and found a most remarkable road cut through the rock; it was about twelve feet wide and about twenty deep. This, however, did not assist us towards getting at the tombs, as when the road had gone about 200 yards it suddenly ceased, having to all appearances fallen away by reason of an earthquake, and the cliff now went down about fifty feet sheer. So there was nothing for it but to go back and try again. We observed some Latin inscriptions cut in the face of the rock which, as I did not copy, I will not give here, but, with other things, giving plain evidence that the whole was the work of man. As all this was very

interesting, we properly abused Tim for not telling us anything about it, and I am sure that worthy's ears must have tingled for the next five minutes, considering the epithets applied to him, notwithstanding that he was not present in person to hear them. We now turned back and made a fresh attempt by a rude steep path in the side of the hill to reach the tombs, very foolishly, and, for what reason I am unable to say, taking our horses with us, in fact, riding them part of the way. When I tell you that the road was never more than three feet wide, and was generally only two, and in one place had fallen away altogether, you will allow it was a trifle foolhardy, more especially as, had we slipped, we should only have gone sheer down about 50 or 60 feet. In one place, at the commencement of the path, on turning a corner we came suddenly on a place where the rock jutted out over the path about as high as one's shoulder, which was most awkward, threatening to precipitate horse and rider over the side, which it very nearly did one of us. However, we got past that safely, but were shortly after brought up by the path finishing in the same way as the road above did. Here was a pretty fix to be in; it was perfectly impossible to turn the animals round, the path not being wide enough, so I set to work to back the horses right along the road again, by no means an easy task, especially as the old cow astern of me had no bridle, and was as stupid as an owl (it was the same one that accompanied me into Damascus). Fortunately, the third had not come as far as we had, and managed to get his animal back without danger; so I set to work to get the old brute back that I just mentioned. He utterly refused to go back in the ordinary way with a steady pressure, as, having no bit, he did'nt care twopence for my pushing, so I had to resort to another plan, namely, that of hitting him continuously on the nose. Every time I hit him he went back a step, but as that step was always in

the direction of the cliff, he apparently having a strong inclination to put his hind legs over the edge thereof, the smack on the nose had always to be accompanied by a vicious punch in the ribs, I myself walking outside him just on the edge. This entertainment had to be prolonged, without variation, for about fifty yards; at the end of which I was pretty tired, and much inclined, as I had been several times during our backward peregrinations, to give the hoary old sinner a shove, and send him over the side, which I think I should have done if my friend the Boss could have got another. My horse did not make any difficulty whatever about going back, being a sensible beast, and he almost did it himself without my assistance. It was very evident now that it was simple madness to attempt taking our horses; indeed, had they not been fashioned something like cats, and accustomed to that mode of progression, they must inevitably have brought themselves, and possibly their riders as well, to an untimely end, for even the old beast ridden by the Boss proved himself sure-footed, in hanging on to the side of a wall with his hoofs. Fortunately for us, the rear-guard of our train now came up, with one of the second dragomen in charge, a Frenchman called Joseph, and they took charge of our horses; otherwise we should not have been able to prosecute our attempts upon the tombs, as the animals would infallibly have been stolen had we left them without a guard. Joseph declared there was no road whatever to the tombs except over the top of the hill, and that would decidedly have been too long a business; but it now struck me I had observed from below a kind of tunnel cut along the face of the rock, open in some places and covered over in others, and we set off to try and find this, which we soon did, and wended our way along it some distance. It was a regular tunnel, cut out of the face of the rock, but, as far as we had gone, without a top. The outside wall of it projected generally outside the

rock above, as if the formation of the rock had facilitated the making of it, and rose in some places above our heads, but in others was not higher than our waists. After a bit we came to a place where it was made a complete tunnel of, by large flat stones, like paving stones, being placed slantwise from the top of the outer wall to the rock. The rock itself also overhung the cutting, which appeared to have been regularly scooped out here. To get through this it was necessary to go on hands and knees, which we proceeded to do, but on looking through we found it was closed up at the other end, so that idea had to be given up. But this was all humbug; we weren't coming all this distance to be stopped at last because a dirty stone had blocked the tunnel up, so I started to go outside. There was a small ledge of the outer wall left by the stones resting on it, and along this I scrambled, holding on to crevices and holes in the covering of the tunnel, and reached the other side in safety, when I discovered there was really no necessity for this, as what we had taken for a stone was only a curve in the formation of it; so I, having imparted this to the other two, they fortwith started, and eventually crawled safely through, having knocked their backs in some places where the tunnel was so low as to cause them to crawl, serpent fashion, on their stomachs. Our troubles were now over, and the tombs were before us. We visited several, and found them to be spacious chambers, with receptacles ('loculi,' Murray calls them) round the sides for the bodies; we counted as many as sixteen in one, but that was much the largest, the others only contained eight or ten. I append a plan of the largest and a rough sketch of the inside, taken from the doorway, where we sat and smoked our pipes. I wonder if the ghosts of the people who had been buried there, and whose solitary remains were a few small fragments of bone, which I found in one of the niches, were looking on. How horrified they must have been to see us

sitting there in that free and easy manner, and how the smell of the fragrant nicotian weed must have astonished them.

About this period we began to feel a trifle 'dthry,' as the Irishman calls it, and we could get nothing but a small drop of water, our last bottle of sherry having, in a most idlotic manner, taken to itself wings at luncheon time, and floated gracefully down the stream, where we had put it to cool, till a stone ran up against it and bent it, so we came to the conclusion that the sooner we got back the better, especially as it was getting late, and the party were a long way ahead. There were flights of steps cut all over the face of the rock, and connecting the tombs one with the other; so down one of these, and up another, we took our way back towards the tunnel by which we came. We passed plenty more tombs on the way, and beside one we saw the remains of a carving of what appeared to have been the figures of a man and woman, which we supposed to be probably the effigies of some persons of importance who had been buried there. After getting clear of the tombs, we also passed the road leading down from the top of the hill, which was the legitimate way of getting there, and passing back through our tunnel, we reached our original starting-point in safety, and sitting down behind a rock we amused ourselves by watching the guides howling and making frantic efforts to make us hear and bring us back, as they thought we were never coming, and, strange to say, began to wax a trifle impatient, which, as they could not see us, though we were only about twenty yards off, rather amused us, but we wanted to rest and eat oranges, neither of which the beggars would have given us time to do, had we joined them, so we laughed and permitted them to howl. We, however, eventually rejoined them, and amidst much grumbling and growling, mounted and pursued our journey; and whilst doing so, I may as well say all I intend to about the place we had just visited, but which we never

found out about till after rejoining the ship and studying Murray, whom I am about to quote, for the few remarks I shall make. It was the ruins of the ancient city of Abila, of which no buildings whatever remain entire, and the tombs above were its cemeteries. It was built upon both sides of the river, and amongst the houses of the modern village, called Juk Wady Barada (the Fair of Wady Barada), which occupies the site of it on the right bank of the river (that on which the tombs were was the left), are many old columns and large hewn stones, but these are all that remain of the once flourishing city, with the exception of the road before mentioned. Its first importance dates about sixty years before Christ, when Lysanias, king of Chalcis, moved his seat of government here, and it subsequently passed into the hands of the Romans, until, in A.D. 634, it was taken by the Saracens. It belonged, in the interval, successively to Philip the Tetrarch, Agrippa, and Herod Agrippa. The Latin inscriptions on the wall of the road were to the effect that the road was repaired by the Emperor Marcus Aurelius and Julius Verus, it having been carried away by the river, the rock being cut through by the agency of Julius Verus, Legate of Syria, at the expense of the inhabitants of Abilene, the provinces of which Abila was the capital. The road had probably been carried on from the edge of the cliff where it now ceases on an arched viaduct or embankment, and thus it was that the river washed it away. The remainder of the cutting remains as it was, one of the most remarkable remains of antiquity on record, and an evidence of the extraordinary works of the men of those days, and the time, labour, and money, they must have expended over comparatively useless ends. There was no earthly reason, that I could see, to make a necessity for a road in that particular place, where it must have been such a tremendous undertaking to make it. Now-a-days, if we want to drive

a railway through the side of a rock, with the help of gunpowder, it would probably not take us long to do it; but even with *that* help, we should never dream of cutting a road to a town through the side of a hill, when you could just as well go over the top; but for those people to have done it centuries ago, before gunpowder was thought of, proves them to have been simple lunatics. The inscriptions tell us that they were not fools enough to spend their own money over it, but I think were I in old Marcus Aurelius' place, and found that I could finger the ready of the Abileni as easily as all that, I should prefer pocketing it, to spending it in such an idiotic way. There, that's all I'm going to say about Abila or its history, and if anyone wants to quarrel with my statements, I refer him to Murray, who is my authority on the subject, and from whom my remarks are cribbed *in toto*. On following the road along under the hills, we perceived that our tunnel, which was in reality an aqueduct, was continued right round till it abruptly ceased, from the very simple reason that the cliff ceased too. It was probably continued, in some manner, upon arches, to the river which was beside the road; but as Murray does not say how, or, in fact, make any mention of this end of it, I am unable to inform you of the nature of the continuation. Suffice it to say, that the force of the stream was so great that it would easily have forced the water up. The road still ran along the banks of the Barada, which, though not so thickly wooded, was beautiful as ever; in fact, I never had a more charming ride than I had that day, as the road hardly ever left the river, and each bend in it seemed to disclose a more lovely view than the last. About two miles further on, the river fell over a ledge about twenty feet high, forming a most beautiful cascade, flanked by an old tumble-down watermill, and crowned by the ruins of two old Roman bridges. We now rode up an incline to the right, leaving the river behind us, and came upon the

plain of Zebdany, which is like an enormous crater, right in the centre of Anti-Lebanon. It is about ten miles long and about five wide, shut in on all sides by the lofty peaks towering above our heads. As we stuck spurs into our nags and galloped away across the plain, we could see the river, which, having taken a turn to the right, ran through the plain below us, and shortly afterwards turns to the westward to a small lake at the foot of the mountains on the opposite side, which is the highest source of the Abana, being between 1,000 and 1,200 feet above the level of the plain of Damascus or Bagdad; and this accounts for the excessive rapidity of its tributary the Barada, along which we had travelled all day; its speed, I should imagine, reaching in some places fully eight or nine knots an hour. I am not sure that I am right in calling the Barada a tributary of the Abana, as it is literally and truly the Abana itself, all other tributaries being in comparison so entirely insignificant, and only to be dignified with the title of small streams, which serve to augment the Barada at intervals, until it swells into the Abana, which is nothing very wonderful itself, being hardly more than thirty or forty feet wide, when it runs through Damascus. Every one of course remembers the words of Naaman the Syrian, 'Are not Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel?' which, as before seeing the Jordan, I always imagined it to be something like the Thames, and not a small muddy stream, gave me the idea of something very magnificent, a trifle bigger than the Mississipi for instance, whereas the Jordan is really the bigger of the two. I have not seen the Pharpar, but if it is anything like the Abana, I can safely advise those who were under the same delusion as myself, to divest themselves of any idea of magnificence, and to put friend Naaman down as a humbug. But then it must be borne in mind, that Palestine is such a peculiarly small country, that were railways invented there

it would only be one day's journey from one end to the other, and that therefore, if they had a river like the Mississipi, the inhabitants would evaporate, thinking the sea was taking an outing in their locality, so we will forgive the ancient historians the blunders they have led us into. Our ride across the plain, which we performed at a gallop the whole way, was not particularly interesting; the ground was cultivated to a certain extent, but appeared at the same time very stony and barren, and the only trees on it were a few here and there on each side of the river, until nearly the farther end of the plain, when the banks again become thickly wooded. As we approached this part, the road again led down towards the banks, and we travelled on for some way parallel to the river, the interval between being occupied by cultivated fields, marked out by veritable quickset hedges, instead of the ordinary landmark, a heap of stones. I pictured to myself the steeplechasing that must have taken place over these fences when the party were passing, and regretted I had not been there. It was now getting dark, and we were anxious to get in, but we could as yet see nothing of the camp, or of any one to guide us there, so after trying down two or three by-roads without success, we stopped and commenced to howl and shout vigorously, at which everybody tried their hand. We were now a party of six, two having joined us with the dragoman Joseph, who by the way was nowhere at all, his mule having naturally failed to keep up with us, and we had just picked up another, a dark youth with an aristocratic name and a treble voice, so we had all the variations of treble and bass, tenor and baritone, but all to no purpose; never an answer came out of the darkness at all. Here was a pretty prospect. There appeared every probability of our having to camp out that night, minus tents and food, and with only about three pipes of tobacco amongst the crowd. Hang this! I say. Ruined cities

and tombs of ancient kings are all very well in their way, but I didn't bargain for this lot. If ever I stop behind to crawl through tunnels again, I trust my fate may be a little better than this. We had better get on and try and find the rest, we shan't get any dinner by stopping here all night. So on we went again. The last arrival's horse, however, now showed strong signs of objecting to any further movement; in fact, it was on this account we had fallen in with him, he having dropped behind the rest of the party by being unable to make his beast keep up. Up to this point he had kept him going after a fashion, by the novel and humane method of delicately inserting the point of a knife between his ribs, but he had evidently arrived at a perfectly callous stage now, and this had no longer any effect on him; so after sundry vain efforts to drag him along, one or two pulling at the bridle, and the rest laying in behind with their whips, we had to leave him, and he shortly afterwards lay placidly down in the middle of the road and slept, fetching into the camp some time during the night. At last we picked up a couple of Arabs, who would probably have robbed a solitary member of the party, or at least tried to, but who, on consideration of backsheesh, consented to guide us to the camp. They did not appear to have seen our party, as they made two or three bad shots, but they appeared to know the likely spots for them to camp, and about eight o'clock we at last caught sight of the gleam of the camp fires through the trees. In ten seconds more we were within the circle of the tents, and in another five were sitting down at the dinner table and roaring for food with all the energy of starvation. Our camp was pitched on a kind of small grass common just at the place where the river, now, however, only a stream two or three yards wide, turns westward to its source at the foot of the hills. We had observed a Dutch encampment here as well as our own, who, on enquiry, proved to be two gentlemen

returning from Baalbek to Damascus, so we accordingly sent them over an invitation after dinner to join us, and drink and make merry, which they accepted. They proved to be very good fellows, both of them speaking English remarkably well. Why is it that foreigners can nearly always make themselves understood in our language, and that we never know a word of theirs? I don't suppose there was one of our party of twenty who could have spoken a single word of Dutch, and yet here were these men talking away as easily as if they never spoke anything else. Why, there isn't one Englishman in fifty that can talk even French decently. I suppose it's an evidence of our superiority or ignorance—which? We dismissed the Dutchmen about eleven, having proved our superiority with regard to drinking Scotch whisky any way, for they departed saying they were very sorry to leave us, but they had to start at seven o'clock sharp, otherwise they would have stopped till daylight, for the whisky was 'ver goot,' and declaring at the same time that our camp was composed solely and entirely of tent ropes. We saw them safe home, however, and left them with, I am sorry to say, grave doubts on the subject of their seven o'clock start next morning, and shortly afterwards were in the arms of Morpheus ourselves.

At six o'clock next morning we had a repetition of Tim's band, of which we had a specimen on the first morning after leaving Beyrout, so, as it entirely precluded all notion of sleep, we tumbled out, though we knew there was no necessity for a start till 9.30 that morning, it being only a seven hours' ride that day. It had been raining during the night, and the ground was rather sloppy, but everything looked fresh and bright as, after pulling the youngsters out of bed, we started off to the stream to have a tub, and it *was* a tub and no mistake, being just about the coldest water I ever experienced, and it was no case of

going in with a slap-dash, and having it all over, but we had to stand up to our ankles and sponge. Many were the yells which proceeded from the throats of sundry of the party at the first touch of the water; but it did us all the good in the world, and we went back to the camp much refreshed. It was now about seven o'clock, but there was never a sign of a stir, much less a start, in our friends' (the Dutchmen's) camp, so after breakfast, which we had at 7.30, in order to allow the baggage to get on ahead, we started over to wish them good morning. They were just getting up at 8.30 when we arrived, and they told us the whisky overnight was very strong, at which we 'smole,' as Artemus Ward says, at the recollection of the multiplication of the tent ropes of the previous night. We now left the Dutchmen to their breakfast, and went back to look after our nags; and there was of course a great hue and cry after proper saddles and bridles, which of course the Arab servants never put on the right horses, after having obtained which, I looked at my steed's condition, which did not look anything wonderful after the rain, but I rubbed him down and put him to rights a bit. Something on the ground, however, now attracted my attention, which was the remains of his last night's supper. I had only got him anything at all, after bullying all the dragomen and servants in succession, when they gave him what I fondly imagined to be corn, and as it was dark I could not see, but I now found the scoundrels had given him nothing but chopped straw. Of course I abused Tim horrid, but it all ran off him like water off a duck's back, he paid not the slightest attention, being too much engaged with getting the tents down and starting the baggage train. The indiscriminate way in which he larruped every one all round with a rope's-end was what amused me. He would see an Arab not working at the other side of the camp; he was off like a skyrocket, whip in hand, and giving a howl like

an Indian warwhoop, he would lambaste the unfortunate wretch within an inch of his life, and the consequence was that they all worked like horses, and the baggage train was ready in an incredible short space of time, stick being the only kind of persuasion that has any effect on those brutes. Even Lewis did not escape the general walloping, at which he was very wroth, and once retaliated, and there was a general scrimmage for five minutes, at the end of which Lewis went away looking very sulky, and resumed the work of packing up; he also, in his turn, using the whip pretty freely. Finding it was no use abusing Tim, and as the servants were all shrieking, screeching, and squalling at the same time, the dogs from the nearest village barking, a few children and women asking for backsheesh, and the tents coming down about our ears, and the whole camp a state of confusion and row, some of us sallied off to forage for provender in the nearest field, which we obtained by cutting handfuls of young corn, which was all very well till the remainder found out what we were after, and all came flocking into the field. They soon bid fair to leave the field empty, when the appearance on the scene of the astonished proprietor changed the aspect of things, and we all evacuated the premises quicker than we came, not wishing to have the contents of the neighbouring village about our ears—men, women, children, and lepers included. We, however, carried off the plunder we had already obtained, and brought it into camp, much to Tim's disgust, he declaring he was responsible, and would have to pay for it all; but we told him it served him right for not feeding the horses properly, so he did not get much satisfaction out of us. To-day was May 1, and I forgot to say that we had found the dinner tent very prettily decorated the night before with great masses of may, with which the hedges all round were covered, looking quite pleasant and home-like. Of course we all decorated our

horses and ourselves with plenty of it before starting. Two or three of us now went out to do a little fencing, at which I found my little horse was not quite as good as he was at going on the flat, and no wonder, considering the weight he had on his back, twelve stone ten, he looking all the time about up to half that, or less, across country. At last, about 9.30, we were all under weigh once more, to the tune of a drizzling rain, which was anything but pleasant. We passed through the village of Zebdany, observing a little further on that of Bludan perched high up among the hills, the situation of which is very beautiful, lying imbedded amongst orchards and vineyards. From a rising ground we had a splendid view of the plain stretching away behind us, the Barada meandering through it, and the lofty peaks of Antilibanus towering up to a height of 7,000 feet above it. We were much annoyed by the rain, which occasionally descended very heavily, and there was less scampering and galloping than on the previous day, the whole party going much more soberly soon after entering upon the plain of Jurghaya, about three or four miles long and about two wide. The rain now held up for a bit, and the party soon began to recover its spirits.

Everybody began to race everybody as before, one young gentleman charging right into the middle of the mule train, which we now caught up, and scattering them right and left, much to the dismay of the Arabs in charge of it. When we started, it was discovered that the horse which we had to leave in the road the night before, had now caved in altogether, and no other was to be got till we arrived at Baalbek; and if anything occurred to excite my admiration during the journey, it was the conduct of his rider on this occasion. Without a word of grumbling of any description, and without even, to my knowledge, the resource of everyone who had any complaint—abusing Tim—he quietly tucked up his trousers, took a stick in his hand, and started

off to walk to Baalbek. I don't know if he ever expected to get there or not, but I know thundering well I wouldn't have done it; I'd have ridden something, if it was Tim himself; it was his look-out, and if he hadn't found me an animal, he should have carried me himself. However, he was not eventually obliged to carry out his intentions, as although he did not actually make Tim carry him, he did the next thing to it, and made his mule do it, and the unfortunate animal had to do double work that day, carrying Tim in the saddle, and the dismounted cavalier behind him all the way into Baalbek; some of the party relieved the monotony for him occasionally by changing places with him for a short time, but that was not much variety for the unfortunate mule, who, I should imagine, must have strongly disapproved. At the end of the plain we came to the village of Jurghaya, which, from a distance, is prettily situated, being wedged in between the hills at the end of the plain, and surrounded by trees with a stream running through them, but, on closer acquaintance, proved to be, like all other Arab villages, the personification of filth and loathsomeness of every description. As I have not described one of them before, I will now do so, as we were continually passing through them, and one description will do for the lot. Imagine, then, a quantity of square boxes, each side about seven feet high and ten wide, plastered all over with mud, and ranged in rows with about two feet between each; an open space in the middle or at one side, filled with heaps of dung and filth of every description, and then cover the whole affair with one common roof of mud, flat, and covering all the boxes at once without any division in it, except where the open space comes, and you have before you the pictures of an Arab village. Imagine, then, the clouds to have rained filth on to it for a month, and you will have completed it to the satisfaction of any one who ever saw one. The population, as

one sees it in passing through, consists of a few ragged and dirty men, a few ragged and dirty girls, a good many ragged and dirty old women, a host of naked and sore-eyed children, and a multitude of lean, starving, and yelping dogs. I can't understand the dogs' language, but I expect it, if interpreted, would prove to be the same as that of the remainder of the population, who all with one accord salute you with 'Backsheesh!' There you are, there's a charming and intellectual picture of the mode of living of those free and noble-minded children of the desert, about whom so much has been written. Every human instinct appears to have been erased from their breasts, except those of thieving and begging; even the maternal instinct seems to have departed from those degraded wretches, for the manner in which the women neglect their children is too horrible for pen to describe. I give a specimen. A woman came up asking for backsheesh; she carried in her arms an object which, on close inspection, proved to be a child; it was so encrusted with dirt, that no vestige of flesh of any kind was to be seen at all; there was no covering for its head, and clustered on the sores round its eyes were thousands of flies, so thick that the poor little wretch's eyes were not even visible. This miserable vestige of humanity she tucked under one arm, while the other she held out to me. She was half naked, having only a few rags hung about her here and there, and a string of coins on the kind of half veil with which her face was covered; there she stood—Nature unadorned—arrayed in all her native beauty and dirt, just about as loathsome and disgusting a sight as it was possible to witness. What a people to occupy a country, about every acre of which so much has been written that one seems almost to be walking on the writings of Scripture as one passes through it, and which could almost be paved with the pages of its own history. Two or three of us having arrived at this delectable spot rather in advance

of the remainder, we pulled up here to wait for them, amusing ourselves meanwhile by jumping sundry banks and hedges which surrounded the village, until stopped by the rain, which now came down again, and continued till we stopped to lunch, which we did in a kind of cave by the roadside, turning our horses out to graze in an adjoining corn-field. Whilst we are at lunch, as this is the day on which we arrived at Baalbek, I will say a few words about it, which are easier said here than on arrival, and will prevent confusion into the bargain.

One sees in the general view of Baalbek on the left six very lofty pillars, which correspond with the 'Temple of the Sun,' and on the right a building with four columns standing, corresponding to the detached part marked 'Temple of Jupiter.' There has been a good deal of controversy concerning these two temples, some calling them one thing, some another; and as I was not there long enough to form an opinion of my own, I wish at once to give my authority for calling them by the names I have. These names were the ones by which they were pointed out to us by our dragomen, and as I am writing the story of our own experiences, I prefer to style them by the names which I knew them by at the time, and not by those which they are called in books. I did not read until after my return to the ship. Murray calls the great temple, of which the six columns are standing, the Temple of Baal, and classes Jupiter and the Sun under the same head; but then he does the same with Jupiter and Baal, and therefore he really makes both the temples dedicated to the same deity, which I think hardly likely; I shall therefore call them by the names I have given them above—namely, the great temple on the left I shall call the Temple of the Sun, and the detached temple on the right that of Jupiter—but I wish every one who reads this book most distinctly to understand that I

advance no proposition whatever about them, and if any one chooses to say I am wrong, he is at perfect liberty to do so; and, furthermore, if he wishes to have any argument about it, I give in at once, and refer him to Tim, who was my informant, I having, as I said before, not had sufficient time there to enable me to study the ruins and form my own opinion. So now, being all friends again, and all possibility of an argument at an end, I will proceed on our trip. By the time we had finished our lunch and our smoke, the rain had ceased, and the day at last cleared up for good, which was certainly a blessing, travelling in the rain not being among the most enjoyable things on earth, to say nothing of the difficulties we laboured under at lunch, stowed away in a dirty little cave, with everybody's toe in his neighbour's mouth; and shoe leather not being the most agreeable sauce in the world, this was annoying, to say the least of it. We used to give the senior cadet, a young gentleman who *would* ride in a fez, and consequently had his beauty spoiled by losing all the skin off his face, a bottle of w——y—we won't say what it was—a day, to serve out to the rest; and I am afraid the rain was made an excuse by some to try and get an extra turn at the aforesaid bottle, more especially on the part of one young gentleman, who shall be nameless, but who was most importunate in his demands, but the senior, being of a very stern and inexorable disposition, I am happy to say, withstood his importunities. Such depravity in youth was very saddening; I am afraid that boy will come to no good, but I will leave him to his own conscience (if he has got one). We now pursued our way, winding amongst the passes of Antilebanon, the scenery being rocky, and in some places grand, but rather barren. One of the party rather startled us by his eccentric movements at this part of the journey, the heat of the sun having been too much for him and turned his head. He had up to this period performed the journey

very soberly, but he now distinguished himself by flying ahead of every one, swaying to and fro in his saddle in a manner that elicited roars of laughter from the rest of us, and threatening every moment to precipitate him bodily from it, and how he escaped that undesirable consummation remains a mystery to us to this day. He occasionally varied the entertainment by getting off his horse and reposing himself quietly by the wayside, where he would slumber peacefully for a short time, until woke up by some one, when he would remount and fly away again. On one of these occasions this diminutive officer amused himself by taking completely the wrong road, and had he not been followed by another of the party, who discovered him asleep by the side of the road, our dinner table might have been one short that evening. Three of us observed this, much to our amusement, from a ledge of rock on the edge of a ravine, where we had located ourselves for five minutes' rest and refreshment. We stopped shortly after this in a large cave at the top of a small mound, at the foot of which the road ran, and, much to our surprise, as the rest of the party passed below, we found we could hear distinctly every word that passed among them, it being echoed up into the cave. This cave was just on the edge of the only object of much interest in that day's journey, a very remarkable landslip of some miles in length, but the exact dimensions of which I do not know. Where the earth has fallen away, a cliff rises, ranging, I should imagine, from about 70 to 200 ft. high, making a regular ravine right along 200 or 300 ft. wide, through which a small stream now runs. The road was now decidedly uninteresting until we came in sight of Baalbek, which of course we all spurred forward to catch a glimpse of as soon as we ascertained we were getting near. I was riding a little in advance with one other. the same who rode into Damascus with me, hoping to see the ruins when we got to the top of the brow up which we were

climbing, when suddenly I pulled up. 'Hallo! what's that,' I said. Rising above the brow, and showing out magnificent and clear against the sky, were the upper parts of six immense columns; nothing else was to be seen, nothing but those stupenduous pillars, rising in all their grandeur above the hill; it was the most splendid sight I ever saw. I knew at once what they were; they were the 6 remaining columns of the great Temple of the Sun, of which there were originally 54. Their height from base to capital is 75 ft., and the entablature is 14 ft. above that; and the whole stands on a wall 50 ft. high, making in all a height 139 ft., or about six-sevenths of the height of Niagara! If those 6 columns appeared so magnificent, what must the appearance of the whole structure have been with 54 instead of 6? We descended the hill in full view of the whole ruins, a magnificent picture, hardly equalled in the world; and, passing through a small village, we entered the precincts of the walls through a lofty arched vault, the walls of which appeared to be very massive, with some small remains of carving, such as some defaced busts, &c., dotted about here and there, a few of them fallen down and lying on the ground. We observed, too, in several places corridors stretching away into the darkness on either hand. The vault led us out just underneath the east end of the Temple of Jupiter, and riding round to the right, passing underneath the Temple of the Sun, which seemed more stupendous than ever, we entered the great court of the temple, where we found our tents pitched, with the irrepressible Union Jack planted in front of ours. There was another English encampment in the Great Court, but of course we did not fraternise with them, it not being the custom for Englishmen to speak to their fellow countrymen without a proper introduction, even though meeting them amidst the ruins of Baalbek; such condescension as that is only extended to foreigners. Of course we went out to

look at the ruins by night; and though, unfortunately, the moon was not very bright, still they looked very grand and imposing. What pigmies we all seemed beside those gigantic monuments of antiquity, towering above our heads, it seemed almost to the sky. But we were getting sleepy, and so we did not stop long in the open air, notwithstanding the attractions.

Bother those fellows, will they never stop that abominable din? I wish they were all strung by the neck to the several columns of the Temple of the Sun. I'd go and witness their execution with the greatest pleasure imaginable. 'Lewis, you blackguard, *will* you get out of this, and be hanged to you? we're not going to start till after lunch, and I'm sleepy.' But there was no help for it; those fellows were the most inveterate wretches I ever came across; they had no more pity for the tired travellers than they had for the horses. So we had to go off to the nearest stream for our tub, notwithstanding the early hour. We found a delightful little bubbling pool under the walls, the sides built up with stone, which was all crumbling away, and covered with bunches of maidenhair fern, where we splashed about for about half an hour, and then back to dress, and breakfast. After breakfast we lit our pipes, and sallied out to inspect the ruins. The first part we visited was the Temple of Jupiter, which is the best preserved of all the ruins. It stands on a platform a good deal lower than that of the Temple of the Sun, and is oblong in shape, the dimensions being 227 feet by 117. I may here mention that I have again taken to 'Murray,' and all the dimensions I give will be taken from him. The walls are solid and very massive, and encompassed all round by a row of columns, 65 feet high, with an entablature 12 feet above it, connected with the top of the building by large slabs of stone, the underneath parts of which are so exquisitely sculptured as to look almost like fresco. The shafts of the columns

themselves are plain, and there are fifteen on each side, and eight at each end. In the interior of the building are six fluted columns on each side, and the carving on the capitals and entablature of the columns both inside and out cannot be too highly admired. But the chef-d'œuvre of the whole building is the portal. This was originally 21 feet wide and 42 feet high, though much of the lower part is buried in rubbish. It is of square shape, the lintel being composed of three large blocks of stone, the middle one of which is wedge-shaped, which, from the shock of an earthquake, has dropped down about one half its height, and hangs suspended there by reason of its wedge shape. 'Murray' says it originally fell 2 feet and remains so, and for once in the way I beg to contradict him. It has fallen, I should say, 7 or 8 feet now, and I mention a circumstance which was brought to my recollection by the sight of the doorway, which corroborates that. I forget dates, but I merely mention the circumstance as it was told me about six years ago by Captain Charles Ewart, R.N., C.B. The doorway was sketched some years ago by Roberts, the well-known Eastern artist, and some few years subsequently, he, Captain Ewart (who is himself an excellent draughtsman), also sketched it. Happening shortly afterwards to meet Roberts, and having his sketch by him, they compared, and found that the keystone had fallen in the interval about 2 feet, clearly showing that the weight of the enormous block was forcing itself gradually down, and that there is consequently every probability of its eventually falling altogether, and thus will be lost to the world one of the most beautiful remains in it. Let us hope no one will be underneath when the unhappy event is consummated. I beg Captain Ewart's pardon for using his name without his permission, but as I have had no chance of obtaining it efore sending this account to print, I hope he will be kind nough to accept that as my excuse. The whole of the

portal is most exquisitely and finely sculptured, with designs of flowers, leaves, &c., and certainly impressed us all with a sense of its great beauty. The refinement and delicacy of the carving were something that a man may live a hundred years and see seldom equalled and never surpassed. The door-posts are hollow, and that on the north side has a winding staircase which leads on to the top of the wall. The only entrance to this is a small hole on a level with the ground, which just permitted the passage of our bodies when lying flat on our faces. Through this aperture we dragged ourselves, and ascending the staircase gained the top, and climbing over above the portal, we found we could walk right round the top of the walls, and in the south-east corner we found a stone with an evidently comparatively modern inscription in Arabic, which I do not think it worth while to put down here, although some of the party copied it. When we descended the staircase again, we found that egress was a very different matter to ingress, as the steps led right down to the hole, leaving only a space of about a foot, and there was no room to stoop down and crawl out, so the only thing to be done was to come down the last dozen steps head-foremost, and thus manage to get our heads out, which threatened to jam us altogether, our head and arms being outside the hole in a horizontal position, and our legs and the rest of our bodies being at a pleasing angle of about 75 degrees inside. Not being acrobats, or having had our backbones removed when young, we all agreed that we had been in pleasanter positions before; however, we fortunately all managed to haul ourselves out, which was lucky, as we should have been sorry to be obliged to heave the temple off our shoulders to extricate ourselves, having a respect for fine buildings and works of art. We now concluded to go and explore the vault by which we came in, and striking off into one of the corridors on the left we found that it ended in a large

arched window, the sill of which was about 4 feet from the ground, and, dropping out of this, we found ourselves outside the walls, which we started to walk round. We were now on the northern side, and a moat separated us from the wall of the great court, the lower part of which is composed of enormous stones, 31 feet long, 13 feet high, and 9 feet 7 inches wide. There were nine of these enormous blocks in a row, and their immense size impressed us greatly. These, then, we thought, are the immense stones of which we had heard so much; truly they far surpassed even our expectations; we had been impressed with the size of a single stone in the ancient wall of the Temple at Jerusalem, 27 feet long, which formed part of the ground-work, but good gracious me! that was nothing; here were nine of them in a row, and all 4 feet longer, and twice the thickness: it was wonderful, and, moreover, they were 20 feet from the ground. But here we were all abroad again, and quite out of our calculations, for on turning the corner and facing the west end, we saw a sight that fairly took our breath away. We stood amazed, and for some minutes could hardly believe our eyes; why those stones were a mere nothing; here were the stones we had heard of, three in number. They are severally 64 feet, 63 feet 8 inches, and 63 feet long, and 13 feet square, and lying in the same platform, 20 feet above the ground. Why, hang it, a line-of-battle ship wouldn't have looked out of place as a weathercock above those masses of masonry; but how, in the name of all that is wonderful, did they get them up there? Ah, how? That's just it, how did they? Wiser heads than ours have puzzled over that without success, and, with your permission, I'll leave them to puzzle over it still; it's beyond me altogether, but I will just give one idea which was mentioned to me by another of the party: whose idea it is I am unable to say. The notion is this, that by digging away the earth from one end, they would

be able to introduce a fulcrum, and by putting enormous weights on the end it would sink, thus raising the longer arm; when, by again placing a fulcrum at the other end, and repeating the operation, the stone would gradually rise, and by continuing to build the wall underneath it as it went up, the stone would eventually be raised into its place. Whether this is the true solution or not I am as unable to state as I am to give the author of the idea; but, doubtless, if any engineer reads this book he will be able to say whether such a method is practicable or not.

At the east end there are the remains of an enormous staircase, and lying about here, promiscuous like, we saw a quantity of little pebbles about 24 ft. long, and 8 or 9 ft. thick, and some of these we at first thought of bringing away in our pockets as mementoes, being, as far as we could see, the smallest stones in the place, but as they were plain and had no carving, we contented ourselves with playfully throwing them at one another, and determined to take away one of the columns of the Great Temple instead. We now went to look at this, and as we were delighted with the beauty of the carving on the grand portal, and amazed by the enormous size of the stones, so we were struck by the beauty and symmetry of these lofty columns. They are, as I mentioned before, 89 ft. high, including the entablature, and are composed of six parts—the base, capital, and entablature, each being one block; the shaft being composed of three pieces, which were fastened together by iron clamps. The carving of the capitals and entablatures is most beautifully finished, and though in some of the columns which had fallen, it looked rough, yet at that enormous height it appeared almost as delicate as the carving on the grand portal, each leaf or flower being necessarily very large, or it would have been impossible to distinguish them from down below. The diameter of the columns at the base is 7 ft. 3 in., and at the top 6 ft. 6 in.,

and the appearance of them is eminently graceful and slender, notwithstanding their really enormous size. Truly the whole place is indeed most wonderful, the appearance of the buildings is something so colossal, that one imagines nobody but a race of giants could have erected such structures, and yet nothing is ponderous, or out of proportion, and the gigantic nature of the undertaking is only equalled by the beautiful symmetry of the buildings, and the consummate skill with which it was accomplished. But now I come to think of it, what a pack of fools they all were, to go and give themselves so much trouble. What the dickens was the good of lifting a stone 64 ft. long, 21 ft. from the ground, when a dozen stones 5 ft. long would have done just as well? It is something like building a bridge over Nelson's monument to go from Pall Mall to the Strand, because it would look pretty. For my part, I'd sooner walk across Trafalgar Square, but then, perhaps, some people wouldn't. 'If there was no difference in tastes, where would be the necessity for fancy waistcoats?' and we know the people of old were given to that kind of foolishness. Anyway we're very much obliged to them, for they have left us something uncommonly wonderful to look at, and gave us the pretext for making a very pleasant trip, in very pleasant company, which I am sorry to say is now drawing to a close, as with a few more remarks I shall have done with Baalbek, and with it finished the places of interest in our route, so I shall not bore you very much longer.

Having gazed our fill at the Temple of the Sun, we proceeded, like all other travellers to such places, to cruise about with a hammer, to try and obtain relics of the place, such as fragments of carving, &c.; and, I shame to tell it, I can feel my cheek burning as I write, to leave our names upon one of the walls. What on earth possessed us to do such an idiotic and cockneyfied thing passes my comprehension, but I grieve to say we did. The only consolation

I have in the matter is, that I wrote mine so badly, that it could not be seen two yards off. I am sure my presiding genius, whoever he is, was watching over me then, and was so ashamed of his protégé, that he guided my hand. I obtained a very good specimen of carving from an obscure corner where it made no odds, by the extreme agility of one of my youthful fellow-travellers, who literally hung on by his eyebrows while he knocked off a piece of a leaf. People will say that I am a fool for my pains in exposing my shortcomings, in having done such eminently cockney things as writing my name and breaking off bits of carving; but I am only mortal, and this professes to be a truthful history, sparing no one, not even its author. While I was thus employed, a few others of the party amused themselves by catching chameleons and tree frogs, and such like wild animals, purposing to take them on board the ship for the delectation of their messmates. The frogs, I am happy to say, never fetched, or the probabilities are that I should have found one in my bed some night, I having a most ridiculous and childish horror of those very harmless reptiles. The chameleons, however, did fetch, and their fly stalking on a string in the ward room was equal to any deer shooting that ever was. We lunched beneath the columns on the north side of the Temple of Jupiter, and during the meal had plenty of opportunity of examining the wonderful carving on the underneath side of the entablature of which I spoke before. I have not attempted any elaborate description of the carving anywhere, as I should only copy it from a book of some kind, and if any of my readers are anxious to read elaborate descriptions of the place, why they had better invest in one of the many able works that have been written on the subject, which is endless when once begun. Those kind of things require study and innumerable sketches and notes to refresh the memory, before one could write a perfect description of

them, and not a flying visit such as we made, with only three or four hours to see the whole place, and I did not even make notes, my resolution to write this account being made long after the trip was all over. Just before lunch the first casualty occurred, by Toby, the diminutive little ruffian whom I spoke of the first day, being quite knocked over by the sun. The little wretch had of course been rushing about in the sun all day, with sometimes nothing on his head, and was of course now very seedy. We were afraid at first he might have a slight attack of sun-stroke, but it turned out to be only headache and sickness after all, though he did not quite recover till the end of the journey; so his small form, and the hill of bones beneath him, were no more seen flying away in the distance ahead, as at first, and his shrill voice was silent for once. About half-past one we were all ready for a start, and, mounting our animals, we once more rode through the tunnel by which we entered, or rather I should say all rode through except myself, for I had a slight accident here in the shape of the whole side of my saddle coming bodily away on my attempting to mount. However, I remedied this as best I could, and followed the rest, but first turning out of my way when I got outside the walls, to look at the small Temple of Minerva, which lies in a south-easterly direction some 200 or 300 yards from the others, and which we had not time to go and see. I got into an old woman's garden to have a look at it, much to her dismay, all the family turning out on me, gesticulating violently and screeching at first; however, they shortly toned their cries down, and reduced them to Backsheesh, which word of the Arabic language I being rather tired of now, I left, and galloped on after the rest. The Temple of Minerva is circular in form, and only 38 ft. in diameter, being very much smaller than the others, and has a row of six pillars round the outside, the entablature of which is semicircular between each

two columns. The carving and ornamentation appeared to be of much the same pattern as the rest of them, but the inside I did not see. It was used about 100 years ago as a church by some Greek Christians, but it appears to be all to pieces now, the roof having fallen in, and the pillars and sides of the building in many places lying on the ground. Talking about this selfsame roof though, this appears to be the only temple which had one, all the others being apparently roofless. I wonder how they managed on rainy days; the wet must have put out their sacrificial fires, which would be awkward in the middle of a ceremony. I found the rest of the party on the edge of a quarry, about half-a-mile from the ruins, in which lies the fellow of the three big stones in the wall of the great court; which is, however, much the largest of the four, being 68 ft. in length and 14 ft. 2 in. by 13 ft. 11 in. Murray states its weight to be computed to be over 1,100 tons; it was probably intended to go on top of the row of large stones on the northern side of the wall. How they ever accomplished the removal of the stones from here to the temples, half-a-mile off, seems almost incomprehensible. However, it has been proved that some people in the olden time—the Egyptians, for instance—knew pretty nearly everything that we have since invented; so perhaps these people knew the use of steam, although we did not find any remains of locomotives or railway-carriages, which we doubtless should have done had we looked long enough. I forgot to mention that almost all the temples of Baalbek are built up with comparatively modern walls of Saracenic origin, the place having been turned into a fortress in the seventh century; and in many places it is curious to see the old buildings mixed with the rough workmanship of later times, which forms a great contrast, the old work being very regular and always massive, whereas the modern part is rough, the stones much smaller, and piled one upon the other anyhow.

There is one of these walls built up in front of the grand portal of the Temple of Jupiter, but is now mostly crumbled away and fallen to the ground, showing plainly how inferior it is to the old work, which, were it not for the earthquake which threw down so much of it 100 years ago, would be almost unimpaired. There is hardly any trace left of the old city, which was once most populous and flourishing, its name being then Heliopolis, or the City of the Sun, which is supposed to have been their principal deity. The population of Baalbek now is hardly more than 100 inhabitants. But to proceed: about another half-a-mile on the road is another ruin, a small circular temple, whose freedom from carving, &c., and excessive plainness are almost as remarkable as the profusion of it to be seen in the large temples, which some writers say amounts to bad taste. It was composed of perfectly plain granite pillars, without base or capital, but merely the plain shafts set up on end in a circle, the entablatures being also nothing but plain blocks of stone resting on top of the pillars. There were inside two rudely cut niches which appeared as if intended for praying. Beyond the fact of the granite columns being beautifully polished, there was nothing much to admire about this ruin. The wonderful polish which the granite pillars had received, and retain to this day, we remarked among the temples themselves, or at least among the heaps of ruins; for curiously enough there was not one granite pillar to be seen standing anywhere, except in this small ruin; but there were several lying on the ground, and their surfaces were as smooth as that of a French-polished mahogany dining table, and without the slightest symptom of decay.

We now bade farewell to Baalbek and all connected with it, and rode off along the plain of Buka'a, not without occasionally casting back a regretful glance at the wonderful handiwork of centuries ago, which we were now fast losing

sight of. However, we soon forgot all about Baalbek and its ruins in the excitement and pleasure of the ride. Our horses were fresh, and the road was good and in some places flanked on either side by turf—all incentives to galloping, &c.; add to this, that the plain was intersected by small brooks, ditches, &c., and you may imagine the sort of hurry-skurry that took place all the afternoon. Some of the horses showed strong objections to the jumping part of the business, and on these occasions there was generally a stoppage of the whole party to witness the attempts to get the beasts over, the performance generally ending by two or three of them depositing themselves and their riders in the ditch, which was awkward for the riders, but somewhat amusing for the rest of the party. At one part of the ride a wild horse of the prairies was seen placidly grazing on ahead, and there was immediately a rush after him. The old bag of bones seemed to enjoy the joke, and lifting his tail in the air, he gave a fling out behind and away he went. There they go; tally ho! forward! helter-skelter across the fields, through the corn, over the ditches, into bogs, anywhere, in chase of the wild horse, who beat the crowd after all, one only getting alongside him; but the old beggar was too knowing to be caught, and dodged him, so they had to give it up. Shortly after this our friend, the country farmer, had a row with his horse, and in order to spite him, he jumped him right into a bank of mud, where he sunk up to his knees, and there stuck fast, his rider at the same time turning a complete summersault in the air, and alighting gracefully on his back in front of him, where he lay and laughed derisively at the unfortunate animal; which conduct was unfeeling, to say the least of it, and must have been 'kinder riling' to the feelings of the poor beast, who shed tears of mortification at the cruelty of his rider. He looked as though he would have said (could he have spoken) that he could

have borne blows with equanimity, but to touch him in his tenderest point—his self-respect—was too bad altogether. It was bad enough putting him in the mud, but to first turn him into a circus horse, and then laugh at him, was more than flesh and blood could stand. It was cowardly too, as, stuck fast as he was, he had no chance of retaliating. I was surprised at any friend of mine behaving in such a manner.

We were shortly after shown the alleged tomb of Noah, who, by the size of his last resting-place, must have been a tall man, to say the least of it; it was eighty feet long! There was nothing much worthy of note in the remainder of our ride that day, until we arrived at the town of Zahleh, which is the largest in the Lebanon, containing a population of 10,000, all Christians. It is prettily situated on the slope of the mountain, surrounded by vineyards, which are arranged in terraces up the hill, and through which the river flows, dammed up in several places to turn a stream through the cultivated parts, and thus forming, in many places, picturesque little cascades. At the foot of the mountain the river flows between rows of poplars and other trees, forming a very pretty glen. Our encampment was pitched upon a grassy slope on the further side of the town, and about seven o'clock we were all in and preparing for the last time to dine under canvas. We were all sorry that our trip was drawing to a close; we had all pulled well together, there not having been one case of disagreement amongst the party since we started. Tim too had done things well; we had been most comfortable, sleeping on bedsteads every night, and actually having carpets spread on the floor of the tent; his food and cooking too had been excellent, and, with one or two exceptions, his horses were far above the average. We had also been singularly free from any mishaps in the way of any of the party being hurt by falls, or knocked up by the sun, with

the single exception of Toby, who was now almost right again. We were, of course, all of us much grieved to be obliged to leave the Commander behind at Damascus; but as he was very unwell when he started, we were partly prepared for it, though that did not compensate us for the loss of his company.

At 6.30 next morning we were roused, for the last time, by Tim's little eccentricities, and sallied out to have our last tub in the open air, which was almost the best part of the trip. I am sure I missed that beautiful tin dish for a week after my return, and after being roused from my slumbers in such a summary manner for a week, they could hardly wake me at all in the ordinary way. We took our bath this morning under one of the cascades before mentioned, which, as about half-a-mile off it issued from the snows of Lebanon, was not warm; to say nothing of the fact of its nearly beating the roof of one's head in. Talk about a douche, this was a douche and a half; there was no stopping under it for more than half a minute at any price. After breakfast, and a last indulge in my narghilé, we bade farewell for ever and a day, with many regrets, to our tents, and once more took our way along the plain of Buka'a, and in about two hours' time rode into the diligence station at the foot of the mountains, of which I spoke in the early part of this narrative. After this our way lay once more along the level diligence road to Beyrout, and after refreshing ourselves at the inn here, we once more started on our homeward route. We lunched inside the courtyard of a small building half way up the hill, and having regaled ourselves for the last time at Tim's expense, we all started off on our own hook to get into Beyrout as quickly as we could, there being no longer any necessity for keeping together, since the road was now straight and no possibility of making a mistake. I started with a spindle-shanked youth, who was riding a famous grey horse that had shown

himself a great steeplechaser the two days previous, but which now began to show symptoms of caving in; so I cantered on ahead of him by myself. He eventually fetched in to about two miles from Beyrout, when the animal quietly lay down on the road in, to all appearances, his final sleep, and there his rider left him, taking away, however, his halter with its many tassels, which he preserved and carried on board as a trophy. I rejoiced when I heard this youth had to walk the last part of the way; he had, at an early part of the journey, lost for me the book which I had brought away to beguile my leisure hours, and I had been waiting for retribution to overtake him, and at last it had come, 'Praise be to Allah!' I myself galloped on, my little horse going game as ever at first; but I found at the end of the day that he was at last getting beat; and no wonder, poor little beggar! this was the fourth day in succession that we had been in the saddle continuously from morning till night, with the exception of the forenoon at Baalbek, and that with thirteen stone on his back and nothing to eat, except a feed of corn which I managed to buy for him at the place where we stopped to lunch. We were now going over old ground again, so there is nothing to say about the country, all that having been described in the first day's ride. About two o'clock I passed the place of our first camp, and shortly after came up with two of the party who had gone ahead. I seemed fated to travel in company with these two; they were the Boss and his daddy,[1] the same two with whom I visited the tombs of the Kings, and with whom I rode into Damascus and Baalbek, and with them I rode very nearly into Beyrout to-day. We pursued our way as fast as we could, walking the hills and galloping the level, making occasionally short cuts, refusing to be warned by former experiences. Boss's

[1] Lieutenant O—— acting as such.

daddy, who was commonly called Biddy for short, once got himself into as delightful a labyrinth of stone walls as ever you saw, and how he got out again I never quite discovered, while we all three once got into a line of terraces, and had to jump our horses down a drop of about three feet, every ten yards or twenty. The manner in which the animals manipulated the drop was most artistic, and did great credit to their training. Instead of jumping down, they would quietly drop their forelegs over the edge, thus cocking their hindquarters up at an angle of forty-five degrees, and as near as possible depositing you over their noses on to the ground; and had we not been prepared, this would infallibly have been the result; then dragging their hind legs after them, they would proceed on placidly to the next. This was all very well, but a trifle shaking, and I thought these abominable terraces would never end. Next time I take a short cut, I'll take very fine care there are no terraces within a mile. We stopped to rest our horses and have a smoke at the same café where we made our first halt after starting, and from here we could see the ship at anchor off the town; and as thoughts of middle-watches began to arise within me, I wished we were again starting, and had all the pleasure before us. My horse held out till within a mile of Beyrout, and then subsided to a walk; he had gone so gamely up to that time that he was more done than I knew, so I stopped at the next café and washed his face and mouth, and after that he seemed a little better, but I did not mount him again, or urge him out of a walk. We passed just before this a long string of carriages full of Turkish bigwigs, and when the others had gone ahead, I came upon some Turkish troops drawn up by the side of the road, with their band playing, who presented arms to the carriages, and afterwards marched off to an encampment they had formed since we had been away, close by here. It was here that the French troops were encamped

in 1862, during their occupation of this part of the country: they also had 10,000 men at Zahleh, the place where we spent the last night. I noticed the Turkish drill differed essentially in one particular from ours, and that was that they gave no words of command, but did everything by bugle calls. I now passed some of our youngsters perched upon the top of a café by the roadside, who seemed much amused at the beaten state of my animal; but I was nearly in now, and at six o'clock I once more rode up to the door of the Hôtel Bellvue, and delivered my little horse over to his owner, who I hope treated him better than the Dragomen. I was sorry to part with him, as he had really carried me splendidly all through, though I am afraid I did not use him as well as I ought to have done. I found six of the party had arrived, including the two who had gone ahead of me when my horse stopped, and four of us accordingly sallied out to get rid of our dust and dirt amid the tortures of a Turkish bath, having previously ordered dinner, on our return to which we found all the party who ever fetched the hotel come in. There were some half-dozen who never appeared at all till next morning on board the ship; one of these—the thin youth—had been last seen leaving his grey steeplechaser to expire in the ditch, and as he had not appeared up to this time, we thought of organising a party of search, but we came to the conclusion that we were much too tired, and that he would, no doubt, fetch on board somehow. Two or three others there were whose return remains shrouded in mystery: such as the stern senior of the cadets, who had been all the journey so intent upon racing everyone, and who has not to this day recovered his disappointment at not beating me, that he did not reckon upon his animal pulling up half way from home; and the young gentleman who set off so pluckily to walk to Baalbek. He was most unfortunate in his mounts, having had three altogether, all of which subsided into the ditch

beneath him. However, all answered their muster next morning on board the 'Traffy,' none the worse for the mishaps of the road, though all agreed that fresh air and a tent were much preferable to cabins, hammocks, and a stuffy atmosphere.

Fellow travellers, messmates, and shipmates, my tale is done; there is no need, I fancy, for me to reiterate what I told you in the beginning, that I am no author; you can see that for yourselves. I have written this narrative for you, and not for the outside public, and my sole object has been to write a story which may, perhaps, serve to call to the memory of those who were my fellow-travellers the incidents of the road, during what was to me a most enjoyable trip. You who read this book, try and forget if you can that it is a written narrative, and fancy, if possible, that I am telling the story with my own lips; for, as the thoughts came into my head, and as I should have spoken them, so have I written. I have striven my best to recall all the incidents of travel, and have, as far as possible, introduced everyone in the party, and I fancy there are not more than two or three who will not recognise their own features in some part of the narrative. And now, before we part for good, let me say two words retrospective of the whole trip. We rode a good many miles, and saw many things that were beautiful, and some that were very wonderful, and I fancy that we shall all retain for many years pleasant recollections of the trip. But for myself, though I shall ever look back with pleasure on the picturesque streets and bazaars of Damascus, the beauties of the banks of the Barada, the sublime passes of the Lebanon, and with wonderment and awe at the colossal magnificence of ruined Baalbek, yet more than all these will linger in my mind to my dying day the memory of the sense of good feeling and fellowship which pervaded the whole party from beginning to end. We never had a disagree-

ment of the slightest kind between any two of the party from start to finish; we came away fully intending to enjoy ourselves, and enjoy ourselves most thoroughly we certainly did, and all went smoothly and harmoniously as the wheels of a clock. My sole regret in connection with the journey was, that it did not last longer, and my principal hope is, that we may all live to make another such trip in each other's company, when I am sure we shall all enjoy ourselves as much as we did on this occasion, providing we all pull as well together as we did then. And now once more let me ask you to make all allowances for my story. Should I succeed in passing an idle hour pleasantly for any of you, and should this narrative serve in after years to call up in any of your minds pleasant memories of our trip to Damascus and Baalbek, then I shall have accomplished all I expect, and my labour will not have been in vain; and even should I fail in this, should you toss the book aside as bosh, and designate its writer as a fool for his pains, for attempting what he had not the ability to fulfil, yet I shall still not think my time wasted; for a work undertaken for the amusement of one's friends cannot be without at least one merit; and I shall always remember with satisfaction that I spent a few hours of my life, at all events, in the attempt to afford gratification to others beside myself. But I am getting maudlin, and that, to say the least of it, is hardly my style; so it is evidently quite time for me to dry up; and with one word of thanks to my companions in the trip for making the journey as pleasant to me as it was, I will close this narrative.

Reader, gentle or otherwise, I kiss your hand. Farewell!

Your most obedient servant,

CECIL B. PALMER.

H.M.S. 'Trafalgar.' At sea.
July 31, 1871.

CHAPTER V.

FROM BEYROUT TO DAMASCUS.

We found ample opportunity on Friday to prepare for our journey, and make such arrangements for warmth as would be necessary in crossing the snowy heights of Lebanon's ranges. I had picked up a wrinkle from Dr. Macleod, whose interesting account of the journey to and from Damascus appeared in 'Good Words' some time ago. I wore two light coats, with a pilot uniform greatcoat over all; two pairs of trousers, and a thick skin rug over my knees; for my feet I had a roomy pair of slippers to put on over my boots, and for my neck a comforter. Wasn't I an old woman? However, I have found it very necessary more than once during my naval experience to look after one's own comforts. If a naval officer, as a rule, doesn't follow this plan, depend upon it, in the long run, if not in the short, he will be the sufferer, for he cannot expect anyone to look after him. In the present instance it was certainly very necessary to make provision for guarding against the sudden transition of climate from the hot plains to the rarefied atmosphere of the lofty and snowy regions of Lebanon's peaks.

I had previously secured beds at the Hôtel Bellevue, and we landed in the afternoon of Friday, proceeding thither with our baggage; which, being safely ensconced in our room, we walked to the diligence office to look at the machine that was destined to convey us to Damascus the following day. It had a lumbering, heavy, waggony appearance, if I may use the expression. There were in it three separate compartments for passengers, and one roomy

compartment on the top for baggage. All could be well covered in, in the event of meeting a storm in the mountains. Occasionally the mountain storms are very violent, as Dr. Norman Macleod can testify, having crossed the range in one at night. But it may so happen that when at the extreme altitude, the storm bursts at one's feet, while overhead the sky is serene and clear. I have no experience of such, and can only judge from what I have either heard or read. The effect must be extremely grand, to look down upon a thunder-cloud as it rolls on its way, far below among those vast steeps and awful precipices; to see the forked lightning shoot forth in dazzling brightness, and hear the rending thunder-peal resound with its echoing grandeur among depths the eye cannot fathom. On, on travels the sullen roar, reverberating, and cast back from peak to crag, until gradually exhausting itself among the distant hills. But I fear I am wandering from my subject.

The three compartments in the diligence are severally named—the coupé (1st class), the intérieur, and banketta. The first class is below, and faces the horses, being immediately under the banketta. It is cushioned and padded, but far too confined to be comfortable; it holds three persons. The banketta is on the top of the vehicle, and immediately behind the driver; it is open in front, but a window can be lowered at will, as in a London hansom-cab. This compartment also holds three passengers, not including the conductor, who regulates with a metal handle the speed of the conveyance when going down mountain-sides. The intérieur is much the same as the inside of an ordinary omnibus, but only provides seats for six. On the roof and behind the banketta is the luggage compartment, covered in like a Romford brewery waggon, and the dimensions of the vehicle's wheels are something of the same character. After satisfying our natural curiosity, we adjourned with an acquaintance—at his invitation—to a

neighbouring building for coffee and cigarettes, the coffee being served in small cups containing about the same amount as would the half of a moderate-sized chicken's egg. From this, after being both presented with a small packet of Turkish sweetmeat, we directed our steps to the hotel, where coffee was served in a more substantial and sensible manner. Reading, writing, and talking soon passed away the evening. Our couches were sought at rather an early hour, to be ready for the coming fatigues of the morrow.

I cannot boast of having had a very sound night's rest, for either the mosquitos, or some other species of insect, would not leave me alone, and their several attacks were very successful in driving sleep from my eyes and keeping me on the watch. At 2 A.M. I was inclined to doze, but at about fifteen or twenty minutes past that hour came a rap-rap at the door. I looked at my watch, got out of bed, and told our disturber he had made a mistake in the time. He apparently did not understand a word I said, but didn't seem to think he had made a mistake, for I had hardly returned to bed a minute or two before he repeated the same noise. It was no good; we could not get rid of our persevering pest, so we rose and dressed. Smoking hot coffee, with bread and honey, was then served; and, after finishing our light breakfast and preparing our luggage for travelling, we found we had risen not a bit too soon, for it was not far from 3.30 A.M. by the time we left the hotel, from which our 'early morning caller' and guide hurried us out into the dark night; and dark it was indeed. I think this very early morning walk of ours must be ranked amongst the many 'never-forgets.' I could not see where to step for the life of me, and kept stumbling along over the uneven road, doing my best to keep up with the guide, who seemed to be endowed with a cat's power of seeing in the dark; for he hurried nimbly on, carrying the luggage. How my companion fared under the circumstances I do not

know, for I had more than my work cut out to look after myself. But the worst was before us. We were here in this open street, with the sky over our heads bespangled with glittering gem-like stars, whose distant light somewhat helped us on our way. Every now and then an unseen dog would give a sudden and angry bark close at our heels, adding very much indeed to the unpleasantness of our 'morning walk' through Beyrout. But, as I have said, the worst was before us. The narrower streets were reached, and the darkness became intense, for what little glimmer of light we had before was now cut off by the streets being covered in. We were as if walking within a dark tunnel. The dogs became more numerous, and started up at every step; and, from their savage barking, it seemed as if before long an attack would be made on us from some quarter or other. I threw out the dagger in my stick, but from the profound darkness I felt it would be of but little or no use until some dog had actual hold of me, and then, of course, I should be able to let him taste what would be very difficult to digest; my pistol, I felt, would be useless in such pitchy darkness, and the noise of a report only tend to excite the rage of the savage beasts around us. More than once our guide addressed them in their native tongue, which they seemed to understand, and by hurling a heavy stone along the roadway our path was somewhat cleared; but I hardly expected to get away from the dark maze of the covered-in streets without a bite; however, we did so. I was not a little glad when we left the tunnel-like thoroughfare behind us, and found ourselves once more in the starlight under the cloudless vault of night, or rather early morning sky, close to the starting place of the diligence. Two or three shrill whistles from our conductor announced our advent. And here we were arrived, and there stands in the oil-lamp and candle-light the lumbering machine in which we were to cross the

Lebanon. Six horses are harnessed to it, and all is ready for a start. We are taken into the office, where the clerk (a Syrian in a fez cap) is already at his post; he causes our luggage to be weighed, but makes no charge; he orders coffee for us, and offers us cigars. His civility was past anything I have met with. Having finished our coffee, we were conducted to the diligence, and took our respective seats, one in the banketta, the other in the coupé, and 3.55 A.M. (about) we rumbled away out of the yard. I believe it is said that the darkest or coldest hour of the night is the one before daylight; whether it was so or not, it was very dark as we slowly drove out of Beyrout into the country beyond, making it very necessary for the conductor to announce with his musical-sounding horn our approach; the merry call, together with the clattering of the horses' hoofs, and the rattling of the wheels over the hard stones, seemed to dispel night and tell us that day was near. It was far too dark to take note of anything we passed except in our immediate vicinity. Strings of waggons bound in the same direction as ourselves were here and there pulled up by the road-side to enable us to pass. During the day we must have passed some hundreds of these waggons in the mountains and elsewhere bound to and from Damascus, all having a uniform appearance and colour. If I recollect right, they occupy four days to accomplish the journey from Beyrout to Damascus, and *vice versâ*. I suppose they never go beyond a walk the whole way.

Well, here I was then, seated in the diligence, and actually on the road to Damascus—the place of all places in the world I was most anxious to see, not of course including the Holy City, Jerusalem. For the first hour or so little around was to be observed of any interest; darkness prevailed for some time; consequently, we were ignorant of the pretty Eastern scenery we were passing through;

but we did not lose it, as, on our return to Beyrout, we saw all around at its best. About one hour's drive brought us to the foot of Lebanon, and it also brought streaks of daylight across the starry sky. How still and clear was that beautiful morning! The sunrise we could not see, for it rose behind yonder prodigious wall, which towered in its truly most impressive grandeur right ahead of us, as if it were a perfectly insurmountable obstacle in our way. Lebanon at sunrise is a picture for the artist, but a very difficult one either to transcribe on canvas or graphically describe with the pen on paper. How prettily Dr. Thompson delineates the scene by moonlight!—'The tired sea gently heaves its broad bosom, and the surf sobs and sighs along the shore like a vexed child sinking to sleep. And how gloriously the full orbed moon rises over Lebanon!' I think many such scenes are almost better left to the imagination than to a faulty description. What picture could do Lebanon justice, and truthfully delineate the grandeur of its boldness, standing out, with every peak and range sharply and clearly defined against the cloudless early morning sky, tinged by the rays of a glorious sun rising on the other side.

The first stage reached, the six chestnut horses were changed for three mules and three fresh horses. About ten minutes were occupied here, when off we went again, but this time slowly, for the uphill work had commenced—plenty of pulling and tugging and whipping had to be gone through. The mules were strong animals, and about the same size as the horses; their pulling powers, perhaps, exceeded that of the horses; but they were not so willing. The driver had plenty of hard work to perform in beating these mules. He clambered down from his high perch and sat on one of the animals while he beat away at the others. It was quite amusing to watch his travelling about among the poor beasts on shafts and things to get at the leaders,

and give them their modicum of whipping. He did not seem to be provided with a long-lashed whip until a stage or two further on, when he was relieved from this clambering about amongst the team for the purpose of urging them to their best. I then observed these gymnastic exercises ceased, and he remained quietly on his perch, slashing up the leaders and those willing animals whom he seemed to be 'down on.'

By seven o'clock we were at a considerable altitude on the mountain. We averaged a pace of little short of four miles an hour, and I suppose were eight or ten miles from the base of the mountain. The climbing stages were, as far as distance was concerned, short ones—about every four or five miles—lasting about one hour or a little more. Occasionally the declivity not being so steep, a trot would be broken into, and by eight o'clock the distance by road to the mountain's brow would be fourteen or more miles off. The morning was clear and very beautiful, and the panoramic view splendid. The road was like a corkscrew, twisting and twirling in all directions, which enabled us frequently to see the panorama below us, including Beyrout and far out to sea. We could distinguish our own ship, lying like a black speck on the waters. Horses were changed and re-changed higher and higher we went. The road's windings were very eccentric—now curling round a precipice, the depth of which seemed almost to take one's breath away, and then over a rocky pass. I trust some idea has been formed of the grand and awful nature of the scenery by the description contained in a preceding chapter. My reader must now imagine himself to be passing up and over this wild region. Snow is seen ahead, also on the left hand, on the higher part of a declivity across a precipice. We toil on and on another whole stage, all up the side of the mountain, but still actual snow is not reached. Higher and higher; hill after hill has been surmounted,

and left behind and below, but still the finger points upwards, and the voice breathes 'Excelsior!' The sun is now high above the mountain, but the rarified air fends off her rays, which are already scorching the plains below. Another hour has gone, and another stage reached. Frequently did one imagine during this hour that the summit of the mountain was gained, and was as frequently disappointed. Now, however, the summit of Lebanon is nearly achieved, and snow was close at hand. About 10 A.M. we were in the wintry regions of Lebanon's heights—snow on the right hand, snow on the left, snow ahead. But, as we crossed about the lowest part of the range, there was no snow to impede our travelling, although, it may be, there was a patch here and there not far distant from the road. And for the sake more of being able to say so than anything else, I got down from the diligence and took up a handful from a patch which lay close by where we passed.

The summit—at least as high as it was necessary for us to go for crossing—of Lebanon being reached, the slow crawling pace of the last several hours broke into a sharp trot, and away we went at considerable speed through the pure mountain air. I did not feel the atmosphere unpleasantly cold, although the eye travelled over miles and miles of snow. I was well protected against the change of temperature I had dreaded; but now that I was passing over the snowy regions I found nothing whatever to fear. We had commenced our climb at the chilly dawn of day, and the higher we got the higher became the sun in the sky; so that by the time we reached our present altitude, it was blazing away in its full force, or nearly so, on the plains below, and had dispelled the coldness of night from the mountains. Doubtless this was the reason we did not feel the cold. It must be fearful work, indeed, crossing this range in winter, and extremely dangerous. Marks are

placed along the road-side, so that it may be followed when hidden by snow. It is fearful to contemplate how easily a false direction might be taken, when the whole conveyance, passengers and all, would be hurled below into some yawning gap. Even during our own journey the horses were more than once inclined to take fright at objects on the road-side, which necessitated the conductor getting down and standing by the object, while he vociferated loudly at the culprits who had left their property there—only a sack of potatoes, or something of that kind, but quite enough to make the leaders prick up their ears, stare at it, and seem inclined to bolt; and this in a region of precipices gaping at one's feet, with their horrible depths, was no joke; however, it soon became all right when the conductor stood near the alarming sack of potatoes. Other objects, such as persons sitting or lying by the way-side, seemed to be much dreaded both by driver and conductor, and much bawling had sometimes to be done to put life into those obstacles and make them move away.

The view that opened itself before us as we commenced the descent on the other side of Lebanon was very impressive. Cœle-Syria spread its wide expansive plains of greenness and fertility to the right and left, with the river Litany meandering and winding its way over them like a silver thread. These green carpet-like plains stretched themselves between the two ranges of Lebanon and Antilibanus, having the appearance almost of a large garden with a gigantic wall on either side, the northern end being left open, while that of the south was closed in by a promiscuous amount of hills and mountains. The range of Antilibanus was a truly fine sight from our present elevated eyrie; noble old Hermon, with his white head, standing out in bold relief to the south of the range.

The road we had to follow was so extremely tortuous in its windings down Lebanon that, as the eye followed it, its

appearance was much like a long snake wriggling and twisting in the agonies of death. The descending journey was a very rapid as well as agreeable one, and more especially so after so many hours of weary toil uphill. Somewhat before noon the diligence pulled up at a small hamlet at the foot of Lebanon, in Cœle-Syria, called Stora, to change horses, and to enable the passengers to refresh themselves with breakfast. The worst part of the journey was over, at least as far as the climbing went, although Stora is not half way to Damascus.

The halt was to be for twenty-five minutes. It was quite a relief to our legs to be enabled to stretch them a little, for the allotted space to each passenger in the diligence would hardly permit of much movement without perhaps making one's nextdoor neighbour in a bad temper. My companion had been so overcome with sleep, that he had unfortunately lost all, or nearly so, of the splendid scenery we had passed through; and, indeed, during nearly the whole day he slept. He had not been on shore for a long time, and consequently was much fatigued from the unusual exertion.

We had brought with us a good supply of sandwiches, so we did not join our fellow-passengers at their noon-day breakfast, but betook ourselves to a log of wood on the banks of the Litany, and enjoyed our tête-à-tête picnic very much. We had been separated all day (seven or eight hours), and were glad to have a little interchange of ideas. All the other passengers apparently were Syrians, so one could not enter into conversation with them very much. Hour after hour of silence became not a little tedious, and only occasionally, at the various changing of horses, could my friend and self exchange a word or so. Having finished as many sandwiches as our appetite required, we washed them down with a drink of water from the cool and beautifully transparent river Litany, mingled with just a dash of

brandy. The water here is so narrow that it hardly deserves the name of river. Its clear stream was running with considerable rapidity through the thick verdure which shaded it on either bank. Leontes is the ancient name of this river; at one place it still bears the name, but at all others it is called Litany, which is possibly a corruption of the Latin word Leontes. It is, I understand, by far the largest stream that empties itself into the head of the Mediterranean Sea, except the Orontes. Both these rivers have their sources in this great plain of Cœle-Syria, and close together. The Litany flows south and the Orontes north. The Litany, I think, has more than one source; but about the chief source is the copious Ain es Sultan at Baalbek. During the season of irrigation even this is used entirely for cultivating the land, so that not a drop of water finds its way to the sea. Many fountains rise in the centre of the plain, and, running into the Litany, increase its volume, as well as the rapidity of its rapidly running stream; and not far from the bridge at Jisr Kŭráone the flood is still further swollen by the streâm from the noble fountains of Mushgharah. From this spot Dr. Thompson gives an interesting account of its onward course, and I feel I cannot do better than quote from him:—'From this onward the Litany is engaged in a furious struggle with Lebanon for a passage to the sea. It has cut out for itself a narrow groove in the solid strata, so deep that no one at a little distance aside from it would suspect that a powerful river rushed between him and the opposite rocks. Yet there it is at the bottom of the chasm, all in a foam of vexation, leaping, darting, roaring along. Now it whirls round the jutting base of some mighty cliff, so sharply that you are sure it bursts from the rock itself. Below, it runs madly against another towering wall, from which you see no escape; but *it* does, and, darting along the base at a terrific rate, launches its whole force against a similar barrier, only

to recoil in shattered fragments, and shoot like an arrow down some secret pathway, quite hidden by overhanging rocks and interlacing sycamores. After about ten miles of this work, it does in reality come forth from the dark mouth of the mountain. At a place called Kureh—"window"—it has tunnelled through a rock more than ninety feet thick, and comes out quietly at the bottom of this solemn chasm. Not long to rest, however, for immediately afterwards it springs madly down among large boulders, reduced in width to half a dozen feet, but of depth unknown. The road passes over this natural bridge from Wadyet Teim to Nihoh, on Lebanon. Some six or eight miles farther south the road from Jezzin to Hasbeiya crosses at Jesr Bûrgûs, and there the traveller has a fine specimen of our river and its behaviour among the rocks. But you must look upon it from the cliffs of Blāt, some five miles below, where it is 800 feet beneath you, tearing at the very roots of Lebanon, and rasping out a passage for itself with mighty din and desperate haste.' One little knows as he reclines on the banks of some placid stream what interminable troubles await it as it travels further on. We have not time to moralise, otherwise we might well compare the early life of a young child to the source of this pleasant, quiet little river. How, as it travels on, it becomes bigger and bigger, when its troubles and struggles soon begin; it is baffled here and disappointed there; yonder it is lashed into a frenzy by some fearful obstacles in the shape of rocks, which waylay it; and so on, and on, until at last it finds peace and quietness in the boundless ocean.

The bugle's sound warned us to take our seats, and we had to bid farewell to this quiet spot. The diligence from Damascus had arrived and deposited its living cargo at the breakfast place. One English lady and gentleman alighted, and we heard for once our native tongue on these plains of Cœle-Syria. Soon after 12 (noon) we were

again moving along at a trot across the plain; the road over which we travelled had been very good, and was so here, but very straight, without any turning. The old proverb is verified on these plains, at least as far as the road is concerned: 'it is a long lane that has no turning.' Almost as straight as an arrow ran this road, spanning Cœle-Syria from Lebanon to Antilibanus. On we rattled and rumbled like an old waggon. The windings of the Litany brought it across our path, but a good strong bridge soon enabled us to cross it. The scenery of the plain did not alter one bit. Here and there we passed some lazy stork stalking through the grass, and there was little else that varied the monotony of this flat sea of green. Everything has an end, and we had now nearly crossed these extensive Cœle-Syria plains. On our left we pass a small hill or large mound. The ruin we see on the top is a great curiosity, on account of its immense age. The Rev. J. L. Porter, late missionary at Damascus, who I understand visited it some years ago, and carefully examined the ruins, came to the conclusion that it exceeds in antiquity anything either in Baalbek or Palmyra. I am sure *that* is saying a great deal.

The plains end about here, and with them our first stage from Stora. We changed horses at a place just a short distance up the slope of Antilibanus. The journey to the mountain's summit I do not think occupied over four hours, but it was a very tedious, weary business, and perhaps far more so than the still greater climb up Lebanon's first range; for the novelty of the thing had expended itself; but the one was so like the other that I must not weary my readers with a description. Hour after hour and stage after stage still found us toiling on our weary way up the steep ascent. There was no scenery of interest to break the monotony or employ either the mind or eye. The road wound along mostly through dismal rocky

mountain-passes, and, unlike Lebanon, there was but little verdure or greenness. At times we passed beneath enormous masses of rock, which seemed almost ready to become detached from the precipitous mountain—at this place quite wall-like—and come thundering down with mighty roar upon our heads. Several masses lay about near the road, showing us how often such things happened. It perhaps gave me somewhat more than an uncomfortable feeling when I gazed aloft into the wild and giddy height, being not a little relieved when this awful pass was left behind. A solemnity and a silence seemed to hang over this region not observable elsewhere.

During the greater part of our pilgrimage up the mountain steeps of Antilibanus, everybody, save myself, was wrapped in apparently a profound slumber; of course I mean the outside people. I could not see how the insiders were employing *their* afternoon. The driver and conductor were both in the hands of the god of sleep, Morpheus. The horses were awake, and toiled upwards at their own pace. I was broad awake, and with eyes wide open, caring to lose not a single point of either interest or otherwise of these wild desolate mountains. It proved fortunate that there was some one on the watch, otherwise I think it very probable the diligence would have tumbled down a declivity close to the side of the road. It was nothing more than an embankment certainly, but quite enough to have caused a grand smash had we gone down. Presently I observed the horses were gradually edging over to the side of the road. I watched until I felt sure that but a little more would have sent the whole conveyance tumbling, toppling over, and then woke the driver, who was greatly startled, and tugged away at the left-hand rein, thrashing into one of the mules as if it were all his fault, and that he ought to have been on the look out; but as he, poor animal, together with his companions, wore blin-

kers, I do not think any blame can be attributed to him. However, he got his thrashing, and will perhaps be 'more careful in future.' Before very long we had another slight escape from an accident. I had observed several large birds hover over us, and some perch on rocks close to us. I rather envied their feathers and intimated to the driver that I should like to have a shot. He pointed to the horses, making me understand they would be likely to take fright at the report; but, by-and-by, one of the men touched me on the arm and pointed to one or two fine birds standing by the road-side, and the driver pulled up the diligence to allow me to fire. I took a steady aim, 'pulled,' and missed; the bird or birds rose with expanded wing, and I fired again, but either missed or failed in giving a mortal wound. In the meanwhile one or two of the leaders took fright, and commenced to plunge; in the struggle one of the horses fell, and, rolling over on his back, 'struck out for daylight.' Here was a pretty 'kettle of fish' away in the mountains. Down jumped the guard, who was fortunate enough to prevent any damage being done to the other horses. The escape was a narrow one, as far as the maiming of the other animals went; but none were hurt, and presently the refractory horse was again on his legs.

This little incident broke the great monotony of the mountain journey, previous to which I found myself inclined to follow the example of my fellow-travellers, and have a quiet little snooze. The almost startling wildness of the dread mountain scenery, in the solemn barrenness of its deep rocky gorges and stupendous passes, seemed as it were to partly cause one to be weighed down with fatigue and sleepy languor.

I am fully conscious of the weakness of my descriptive powers, and am hardly aware whether I truthfully convey my real feelings. The crossing of the Antilibanus ranges

was very different in one way to that of the first Lebanon. We seemed to be so long in travelling over the summit; for, when there, there was still plenty of up and down hill work to be done. I found myself for a long time looking out for the plains beyond, before they actually appeared. We at last reached the final hill—rocky and barren. I shall remember for some time to come the hideous black snake that was pointed out to me, wriggling its way among the stones close to the road. I have seen many snakes, but I think this may be ranked among the very ugliest. On gaining the other side of Antilibanus, I never before beheld such tortuous and eccentric windings as the road presented, continuing on in a perfect maze towards the sandy plain beneath. It appeared as if the mountain was literally seamed with numbers of roads leading in every conceivable direction, so interminable were its serpentine twistings. The scenery was very dreary and wretched, so different from that we beheld while descending the other range of mountains, when we looked down upon the green, fertile, and well-watered plains of Cœle-Syria, some six hours previously.

All now was desert, rock, and sand, an utter and entire wilderness in the extreme sense of the word. Not a blade of grass or stump of tree do I remember seeing for miles. Reaching the base of the mountains, the road as in Cœle-Syria became as straight as an arrow as it stretched its dreary length across the desert of Abilene. If ever a ride or drive was tedious, this one across the desert was. The road was much broken and worse than any part we had travelled over during the day; for a long distance it had been mended, but for want of moisture the stones were loose. It was hard work for the cattle lugging the heavy diligence over and through them. But where was Damascus? surely it ought to be in sight; not a vestige of it could yet be seen. Oh, for something green to rest the eye on,

and give it relief from the steady glare of the sun on the bright rocks and sand. There was nothing of the kind anywhere. This desert plain seemed to have no end; the road was straight and flat. I was tired and weary—on, on we went, but seemed to make but little progress. The horses had been again lately changed, and stepped along well enough, but not sufficiently quick to please me. Suddenly right ahead was quite a beautiful vision; could it be a mirage of the desert or a reality? An avenue of the brightest green trees appeared directly before us. It was no mirage, but a cheerful, refreshing reality. We drove on, and were presently on the banks of the loveliest little river I had ever seen, with a profusion of trees of variegated species, casting their cool shade over its waters, and sometimes almost dipping their branches in the rushing stream. We ourselves were driving through a perfectly enchanting avenue of trees, rich in their luxuriant foliage of the brightest spring-like greenness. One could hardly realise the fact of such a sudden and violent transition from the desert to this scene of enchantment. Nevertheless, it was a beautiful reality. How delightful, and how difficult, to prevent oneself from indulging aloud the expressions of pleasure which filled one's breast! Almost every minute seemed to add fresh beauties to the lovely spot. The river along whose banks we drove on the left was the Barada—the ancient Abana. Now on either hand rushed a rapid stream, with here and there a pigmy waterfall, the splashing of which seemed to add freshness to the air. The diligence rumbled heavily over the bridge at a place called Dummar, or some such name; and one could almost imagine himself amidst a scene in the 'Arabian Nights'—rivers, trees, waterfalls, luxuriant verdure, gay costumes—and this very house by the bridge painted over with a variety of pictures seems to confirm the idea that we must really be amidst a scene of the 'Arabian Nights,' or else in some

delightful dream. Mile after mile we drove through such scenery, the equal of which I had never before beheld. Rivers and trees of no common beauty on either side of the road; the river on our left flowed considerably above the road's level, while that on the right was below it. The novelty of the scene and scenery filled me with quite a childish delight. I felt quite exultant. I was like one who had never travelled and was suddenly transported to realms of Eastern loveliness and beauty, of which I had never even read or suspected the world to contain. It was the extreme brightness of everything, the unusual greenness and freshness of the dense foliage of the trees, as well as the thick luxuriance of the verdure, with rivers mingling therewith on either hand, with their tiny waterfalls and musical refreshing sound, which gave such enchantment to the scene; the suddenness of leaving the desert for such doubtless added much to the feelings given rise to. For eight or more miles we passed through this beautiful avenue before reaching Damascus. This avenue at first was apparently a mere strip of fertility in the desert caused by the river Abana; for immediately through the trees on the right rose a sand-hill or mountain, in bluff boldness and barrenness, without a sign of greenness anywhere as far as I could see, and having just the appearance of a sand-hill thrown up on the sea-shore, but of gigantic size. We now stopped for the twelfth or thirteenth time (I cannot say exactly, for I had long lost all account) to change horses, and six fine greys were harnessed to the diligence. Soon after this—our last stage—we passed an ancient road and wall, the first specimen of great antiquity previous to reaching the oldest city in the world, the capital of Syria, Damascus. With longing eyes I stretched my gaze on ahead to catch the first glimpse of the wonderful city.

Day was drawing its long length to a close when the

coachman pointed out to me the minarets and pinnacles of Damascus. From the approach of the road there is nothing striking in the first sight, being only seen from the plain on which Damascus itself stands. The imposing view is from a neighbouring hill—the same, I suppose, from which most pictures of the city are taken. The straight avenue-like road along which we had travelled for the last hour came to an abrupt end, turning sharply to the left across a common, with a small but very rapid river running through it and into the city of Damascus, which now burst full upon us with its hundreds of minarets and mosques. There were no suburbs to mar the view, although we had passed several houses in their pretty Eastern gardens along the road. All around seemed to wear in my eyes a strange kind of newness. I had never seen anything quite like this before in any of my travels, either in India, Arabia, Egypt, or any part of either Africa or Europe. I had roamed in many countries, and had almost begun to fancy a sameness in everything I saw; but here, behold! there is a something indefinable, a something so novel and strange! What can it be? Is it the theatrical costumes we see around us? Can it be the unusual nature of the scenery, the peculiar clearness of the atmosphere, the dense-like blueness of the sky, the prancing handsome steeds ridden by the turbaned Turk or dark-visaged Arab or Druse? Or what can it be?

The guard sounded his merry horn, and the heavy diligence rolled smartly on towards the entrance of the ancient city; its arrival being evidently the event of the day, to judge from the interest depicted on the faces of the numerous turban-headed individuals we passed.

The gayest and most fairy-like scene of all was on our entering Damascus. Formerly we 'dogs of Christians,' as the Moslems were pleased to designate us, were not permitted to enter this so-called 'holy city' otherwise than on foot. The first Consul Great Britain sent out here (Mr.

Moore, I think), was forced to dismount at the gate, as he approached on horseback arrayed in the uniform of his office. This custom has since been remitted, and we were allowed to retain our seats. On either side of the gate as we entered were a crowd of people waiting to receive us. Their *bal costumé* appearance made one almost fancy he was beholding some theatrical scene on the stage of a grand opera. The women formed an entirely separate crowd from the men, and were ranged on the right of the gateway; from head to foot they were robed in spotless white, faces and all being hidden, and a bright red-slippered foot here and there appearing from beneath their garments, being about the only relief from the mass of white; they looked like a troop of ghosts—picturesque perhaps, but almost ghastly. On the left were grouped the men, the variegated colours of their costumes making a violent contrast to the white, statuesque-like crowd opposite.

CHAPTER VI.

DAMASCUS.

The diligence drew up within and close to the gate, the company's officers being there. The time of our arrival was, I think, a little before 7 P.M., and darkness was coming on The first thing to be done was to secure seats for the return journey, next Wednesday; but as we could not get the places we wanted, we made up our minds to return to Beyrout the day before, thus giving ourselves but two whole days in the city. It was very fortunate that we secured places when we did, otherwise it is most likely we could not have got back before the expiration of our leave of absence. Two American gentlemen, who were also securing places for Tuesday, informed me that our party were

at the hotel. They were all there safe, but not over sound. A walk of about ten minutes brought us to this, the only hotel in Damascus, and I somewhat dreaded the probability of finding no spare beds. Our officers, numbering about twenty, would increase the quantity of visitors to an unusual amount. It was too dark as we threaded our way through the streets to take much note of anything. I know that after leaving the ticket-office we went outside the gate, turned to the right, and followed the river Abana for a short distance; then, turning to the left over a bridge, crossed its rapid stream into rather a *crooked* street which led us *straight* to the hotel. We entered by a very small doorway into an open square place with a fountain in the middle. A little further on we were led to a much larger square place, with trees, and a refreshing piece of water in the centre. The hotel was built round this. On the left was a broad flight of steps, leading up to a kind of verandah or extensive balcony, along which were ranged the principal bedrooms. Close to this staircase was the dining saloon, and then comes the cooking department, retiring saloon, and more bedrooms. Opposite to these bedrooms, across the square, was a lofty apartment, entirely open in front to the air, as if one of the four walls had been knocked down. A table occupied the centre, while lounges were placed along the three sides.

We had scarcely entered the precincts of the hotel when familiar voices fell on our ear. An extensive bargaining was going on with a silk merchant, who was temptingly exposing his wares for sale before our party of officers. Accommodation was found for us, and as dinner was nearly ready, we retired to prepare ourselves for that welcome meal, and change the clothes which were more or less travel-soiled by our long journey of more than seventy miles. I felt tired, having had but little rest the previous night, and being up again about 2.30 A.M., combined with

the toilsome journey over both Lebanon ranges, Cœle-Syria and the Abilene desert. At dinner we met the whole of our mounted party, with the exception of the commander, who was ill in bed. He was not well when starting from Beyrout, and got worse by the way, and had to come on by easy stages. The diligence passed them, but being full it could render no assistance. It was a weary business indeed for him, but he managed ultimately to reach Damascus. The first few of the party, the whole of whom had encamped one night on the other side of Antilibanus, in Cœle-Syria, had fetched in about 6 P.M.; the previous evening others struggled in at various hours, the last of all arriving at one o'clock in the morning, bringing with them a midshipman who had been kicked on the knee by one of the horses; hence their progress had been very slow. He was not seriously hurt, and a little time and rest enabled him next day to proceed with the others to Baalbek.

All dined at the table d'hôte, the whole table being occupied from end to end. Dinner over, we withdrew outside, in the open air; some smoked, while others amused themselves with a little more bargaining; and in recounting our several adventures the evening soon slipped away, and I felt quite ready for a night's rest. I had to climb up a ladder to my bedroom, entering it either from the outside by the window, or else passing through another person's room, and crawling up another ladder to a square hole in the floor. This did not much inconvenience me, as long as I could have a place to lay my weary head. As usual I made a few notes in my Journal Letter, and then retired behind the mosquito curtains and went fast asleep.

Sunday dawned, and I gave way for once, and lay till a late hour in bed. There was nothing of importance to be done, for this was not Jerusalem; otherwise, ere this perhaps I should not only have been up, but dressed and out on Mount Zion. Fatigue was not permitted to interfere

much with my movements in the Holy City; but here it was different; and I trust I need not be very much ashamed to have to state that I was not out of bed until considerably past seven o'clock, and not dressed till eight, or past. Before I had reached the last round of the ladder that conducted me to the regions below, all our officers had mounted their horses, and were riding away from Damascus, on the road to Baalbek. It seemed really quite sad that they were obliged to start to-day—the Lord's Day—which should be dedicated to Him; and that perhaps more than one, during the excitements of the journey, should have forgotten altogether what day it was.

Breakfast No. 1 I made in solitude, regaling myself on the customary fare of bread, and honey, and eggs, and coffee. But oftentimes how wholesome is solitude! It is when quite alone that the mind is generally busiest. Damascus! Only to think that I was really in that city—the most ancient of all the oldest cities in the world—could it be reality, or was I still in bed dreaming? The bread, honey, and eggs plainly told me it was no dream, and that I was truly here. But I must not joke.

This, then, was the one city of the whole world which had resisted time and weathered the storm, of not hundreds, but thousands of years, and was still as it was thousands of years ago, great and flourishing. Cities and cities had gradually sprung up all over the universe; by degrees they had attained to mightiness, and even grandeur; but time at last told upon them: slowly and almost imperceptibly they descend from their lofty pedestals, till finally, as centuries roll on, they crumble and fall into ruins; their past histories and records become blotted from the volume of ages, and nothing is left remaining but the time-worn portions of the once proud mansions that reared on high their bulwarks, as if in defiance of coming years; and all that once was rife with the busy tread of hundreds seeking wealth and plea-

sure, is now desolation and silence. Not so with Damascus —before them it was, and it still remains, now as then. Where are the, in times gone by, mighty cities of Babylon and Nineveh? Where is now *their* grandeur and strength? Even *they* were *infants* when this was an *old* city. Does not *that* seem more than wonderful? How often has this city, which dates perhaps as far back as the Flood, been taken and conquered by powerful monarchs of mighty cities, which now themselves lay crumbling in the dust, their stories and histories almost wiped out from the world's records and the memory of man! but still Damascus not only lives, but flourishes. The monarchs of Nineveh, Babylon, Persia, Greece, and Rome have conquered it. Under each and every dynasty it has prospered, and outlived them all. The age of Damascus is not known, and one can hardly give an estimate of it approaching at all to accuracy. It is mentioned in the early part of the Bible—namely, Gen. xiv. 15 —but its age even then may have been great (1913 B.C.). Again, in the next chapter, v. 2, we read that Abram's steward was Eliezer of Damascus. In 2 Sam. viii. 5, 6, we find it mentioned in connection with some of David's victories; and in Amos i. 3, 5, the prophet, by the word of the Lord, prophesies against it. The most interesting story of all is contained in 2 Kings v.

Naaman the Syrian, and general of King Benhadad's army, was an honourable and a mighty man of valour, and had achieved, by the help of the Lord, great things for Syria. But with all his honours and his greatness, and all the benefits his master the King could shower on him, life was a misery to him—he suffered from that fell disease, leprosy. The Syrians, after their successful battles with the Israelites, had brought away amongst their prisoners a little girl, and the child became the maid of the great general's wife. One day, when doubtless she heard her mistress mourn for her husband's dreadful and incurable

disease, she said, 'Would God my lord were with the prophet that is in Samaria! for he would recover him of his leprosy.'

It may be that the words of the little maid were not believed, but nevertheless they were communicated to the 'captain of the host,' and the King of Syria recommended him to go and make the trial. He too, most likely, was only too willing to catch at the smallest straw or chance of being cured. So Naaman started on his journey from Damascus, taking with him a letter of introduction from his king to the king of Israel, saying that he had sent his general 'that *thou* mayest recover him of his leprosy.' On this communication reaching the king of Israel, his answer was very characteristic, knowing the incurableness of the disease. 'He rent his clothes and said, Am I God, to kill and to make alive, that this man doth send unto me to recover a man of his leprosy? Wherefore consider, I pray you, and see how he seeketh a quarrel against me.' When all this came to Elisha's ears, he sent at once to the distressed monarch, saying, 'Wherefore hast thou rent thy clothes? Let him come now to me, and he shall know that there is a prophet in Israel.' So Naaman, with all his parade, in his chariot, and with his horses, went at once to Elisha's house and stood at the door. But, in spite of all this display of wealth and mightiness, Elisha does not even vouchsafe to come to him himself, but sends a messenger, directing him to 'go and wash in Jordan seven times, and thy flesh shall come again to thee, and thou shalt be clean.' Naaman, in his anger and disappointment, goes away saying, 'Behold, I thought, he will surely come out to me, and stand, and call upon the name of the Lord his God, and strike his hand over the place, and recover the leper. Are not Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? May I not wash in them, and be clean? So he turned and went away in a rage.' Just see the sin

and folly of pride. Doubtless his arrogance and haughtiness were much wounded by Elisha's merely sending to him, a man of his importance, a messenger, instead of at once hurrying thither himself, and making lowly obeisance before the mighty man of war. How, indeed, from simply giving way to this pride, he might have cast aside the cure that was now within his grasp, and remained an incurable leper to the end of his days! May I be allowed to remark in passing, *cannot each one of us learn a lesson from Naaman the Syrian?* However, his servants came near to him, and entreated him, and cooled down his angry pride by pandering to it, saying, 'My father, if the prophet had bid thee do some great thing, wouldest thou not have done it? How much rather, then, when he saith to thee, Wash and be clean?' The proud man at once saw the force of this argument, and, as the prophet had directed, he went down to the river Jordan and dipped himself seven times; and, lo and behold, an immediate change took place: 'his flesh came again like unto the flesh of a little child, and he was clean.' He then, with all his followers, hastens to return to Elisha, and as he stands before him, says, 'Behold, now I know that there is no God in all the earth, but in Israel. Now, therefore, I pray thee, take a blessing of thy servant.' But, in spite of all his urging, the man of God refuses to take anything in return for the miracle he has, through God, wrought in the body of Naaman. After that he had departed, Gehazi, Elisha's servant, bethought him that he would run after him and receive somewhat from him. So he ran after Naaman, who now, humbled and thankful, when he saw him running, pulled up his chariot, and courteously alighted, and went to meet him. The tragedy which concludes this story now approaches. For a little gain and temporary benefit Gehazi lies unto Naaman, saying, 'My master hath sent me, saying, Behold even now there be come to me from Mount Ephraim two young men of the sons of the prophets: give them, I

pray thee, a talent of silver, and two changes of garments.' *What a cut-and-dried lie!* 'And Naaman said, Be content, take two talents. And he urged him, and bound two talents of silver in two bags, with two changes of garments, and laid them upon two of his servants; and they bare them before him.' Now, having carefully stowed away his ill-gotten property, what follows? It is rarely that one sin can be committed without others following in its wake; as also a single lie oftentimes necessitates many others to bury and conceal it from the eye of man; but no misdeed, no matter how trifling or how great, can be hidden from the ever-watchful eye of God. *We all know this*, but how few of us act accordingly! *Shall we begin now*, or suffer ourselves to be lost for *temporary* passing pleasures, which *satisfy not*, as did the sinful and weak Gehazi?

Let us ever remember this, that there is no greater coward than the sinner, and none braver or more courageous than the truly good man. After, then, having put away the property, Gehazi stands before his master. 'And Elisha said unto him, Whence comest thou, Gehazi? And he said, Thy servant went no whither. And he said unto him, Went not mine heart with thee, when the man turned again from his chariot to meet thee? Is it a time to receive money, and to receive garments, and oliveyards, and vineyards, and sheep, and oxen, and men-servants, and maid-servants? The leprosy, therefore, of Naaman shall cleave to thee and unto thy seed for ever. *And he went out from his presence a leper, as white as snow.*' *And even so in the end will it be with each one of us*, if we persist in giving way to sin, and living for the things that perish. Be sure that our sin will by and by find us out, and there will *then* be no escape from the punishment. Pray, then, 'let us work while it is yet called day, for the night cometh when no man can work.' 'Now is the accepted time, now is the day of salva-

tion.' How fearful, how horrible, will be the end to those who permit their many golden opportunities one by one to slip by, until at last the enemy of mankind has gained his victory over the lost soul, in whose ears the din of the howl of exulting demons will ring, with deafening loudness, the awful words—'*Too late! too late! you cannot enter now.*' '*Let us work while it is yet called day.*'

There is no Church of England in Damascus, but only a Presbyterian Missionary Chapel. The English service commenced at 11 A.M., one in Arabic preceding it. I trust I shall not shock my Catholic brethren when I state that I preferred joining the 'two or three' gathered together in God's name to remaining absent altogether from a house of prayer on this the Lord's Day—Sunday.

I engaged an intelligent guide at the hotel; he spoke English well, was a Christian, and a member of the congregation. He was a Syrian. From this man I obtained much information relating to the Christians in Damascus and their persecutions. He informed me that the total number of inhabitants was 160,000, which included 16,000 Christians and 7,000 Jews; that at night no Christian could go outside the city without the chance of being murdered; and, if it were necessary to do so, he had to collect together twelve of his friends, all of whom, armed with revolvers, must be ready to fight. The bitterness against Christianity and Christians was intense. He related to me an incident that happened either 'yesterday or the day previous,' in which a Christian, for some slight imaginary or real offence, had been dragged without the city and beaten, and from after information I heard that he died this (Sunday) morning. The incident was related to me as I walked with my guide through the streets. He met a friend, and after exchanging a few words with him, he turned to me and said, 'He is dead.' He pointed out a gash on his own face, the wound having been received at about the time of the dreadful massacre of the

Christians in 1860 in Damascus. He was asked to turn Mahommedan, but he answered, 'No, I will die for Jesus Christ,' when some person cut at him, and the pain made him give in, and nominally he became a Mahommedan. On Monday morning I was told that four more Christians had been murdered in their beds in a neighbouring village. Why all this dreadful persecution? The poor Christians of Damascus were all ready and prepared to resist another massacre; their fire-arms charged, and awaiting a second onslaught. But what could 16,000 do against more than 130,000 raving fanatics? I should remark, perhaps, that these Christians are nearly of all nations. A very few Europeans reside in Damascus.

At 10·30 A.M., after paying a visit to the sick Commander, whom I was glad to find better, I started off alone with the guide to attend church, my companion preferring to remain behind. The streets were all alive with people, and there was no appearance whatever of its being Sunday. Shops and stalls were all open, and the numerous vendors of all kinds of wares were squatted on their haunches, doing their best to make trade. Here is a man selling ices, made with snow from Antilibanus; here comes another with a large kind of bottle containing lemonade, iced with pieces of snow from the same mountains floating about in it. What a noise he is making, clanging together pieces of metal to call people's attention! The weather is hot, and the sun is pouring down its burning rays, so I dare say he will soon do plenty of business. One of the most noticeable objects in Damascus are the numerous dogs lying everywhere about the streets asleep, and move they will not for hardly anything. They lie about quite in the thoroughfares, and more than once I saw a camel, mule, or other beast of burthen, nearly tread on one; but these animals seem to be very careful where they step. One camel trod so close to the body of one of these sleeping brutes, that you would

almost think he was experimenting as to how near he could go without crushing him. A native, to illustrate to me the extreme laziness of these dogs, stood on one of their prostrate bodies without his seeming to care about making a move. In the daytime these dogs are harmless, but at night, to strangers, they are fierce and dangerous. The hotel being quite at the outskirts of the town, made it not *very* hazardous for the last of the mounted party when they arrived in at 1 A.M., although, of course, there was some risk of their being attacked. Their dragoman was in a great state of mind, and carried revolver in hand ready; but to fire, I should say, from what I heard, would be death. A sharp two-edged sword would be far the best weapon of defence, for the noise of a pistol's report would soon surround you with dense packs. My guide explained to me that I could have no idea of their immense numbers, and laughed at the very notion of a revolver being of any use; he said they would come from all parts of the city in hundreds!—thousands!—and he became quite excited. The terrible wolf or jackal-like dogs are almost, if not quite, as numerous in proportion within the city as the jackals are without. Some of the midshipmen the evening previous to leaving Damascus went out for a raid among some of these dogs; they returned safely, but perhaps are little aware of the risk they had run. Midshipmen do such curious things at times, that it seems quite wonderful they do not frequently come to grief.

My guide and self had not been many minutes on our journey when we met with an adventure which it is possible might have ended tragically had we not opportunely passed at the time. I very fortunately had brought uniform with me, intending to call on the British Consul, but who happened to be absent from Damascus, and I was this morning wearing uniform. We were traversing one of the principal streets, when we observed a motley crowd of turbaned

heads advancing towards us. They were dragging with them a poor man, struggling in vain to get free. What *was* the matter? what *could* all this disturbance mean? what was the cause of this excitement? and what were they doing, or going to do, with that poor man? My guide briefly replied, 'That man is a Christian, and they are dragging him outside the city to beat him.' Of course I could not think of permitting a brother Christian to be dragged away before my very eyes to be perhaps martyred by a savage crowd of Mahommedan fanatics, without rendering the utmost assistance my feeble powers would permit for bringing about a rescue. I was armed as usual, but common-sense told me it would be simply and only madness to make the slightest show of using force to such a throng, and only as a very last and desperate resort could I think of using either pistol or dagger. I at once determined what course to pursue, which was to assume an air of authority, mingled with determination and gentleness, taking every possible care and precaution to give no cause for further excitement. I made my way through the crowd direct to the captured Christian, attempting softly to press back one of the ruffians who grasped him; he jabbered away at me, not one word of which, of course, could I understand. I only replied by slowly moving my head from side to side, smiling slightly, as much as to express, 'All that you can say will not convince me you are doing right.' The man finding me perfectly inexorable, gradually relaxed his iron grasp, and withdrew his hold on the poor Christian; and he, together with the concourse, evidently taking me for 'some one,' with my quiet, grave, mysterious manner added to my being in uniform, offered no further resistance, and stood back as I gently and slowly pushed the released prisoner before me. My guide, however, in his zeal, might have marred the whole of my arrangements he commenced, at once, an attack on one of the two men

who held the prisoner, and I much feared knives would be drawn and shots fired, when, others coming to our rescue, there would have been a general mêlée, and much blood spilt. However, nothing of the kind happened, and not even a blow was struck to effect the rescue; and I felt not a little elated in coming through so easily, and with success, in what promised to be a very tough job. We conducted our captive to the Christian quarter, and there left him; poor fellow! he was earnest enough in his acknowledgments.

His offence—for which, probably, he might have lost his life—was, he had been drinking too freely; and I observed at once that he was the worse for drink; and after all disturbance was over I intimated to him, through my guide and interpreter, how sorry I was to see a *Christian* in such a state. Ah! even in Damascus, where champions for the faith were and are so much required, the Christians have not a good name. They are said to be 16,000 in number; but many, very many, of these are simply hereditary Christians—Christians in name only, and not in deed; there are, however, a 'small few' amongst them who are brave, faithful soldiers of the Cross. It seemed to me so sad that this comparatively small and isolated body, amidst so many thousands of Mahommedan savages, should, as a whole, so ill deserve to be named, after Christ, Christians. Their bad deeds are often, doubtless, much magnified by their bloodthirsty enemies, who point and jeer at them, saying, 'Is this Christianity? Is this your love for Jesus?' And really they are oftentimes only buffeted for their faults—faults, doubtless, that in a Mahommedan no notice would be taken of, but nevertheless such; the just have to suffer with the unjust. The wretched native Christian, for instance, whom I was enabled to take from the hands of his probable would-be murderers, had committed an offence of which, it may be, no notice whatever would have been

taken, had he been otherwise than a so-called Christian; but still the offence was committed, and by such an one. A good Christian gentleman remarked to me next day that, in mercantile dealings, he would prefer treating with a Mahommedan to a Christian. How sad for holy Christianity!

Many of the streets we passed through on our way to the Christian quarter were covered in with fragments of matting-work, to ward off the fierce rays of the Eastern sun. The streets were much crowded, and the theatrical appearance of the costumes helped to cast novelty over the scene. Some of the ladies were handsomely robed from head to foot in red silk, profusely worked and ornamented with gold or silver; and the variety of shops and articles of all kinds for sale were worthy of something more than a glance.

On reaching the Christian quarter the curtain of the first scene dropped, and a totally different one became revealed. Here there was an appearance of rest and quiet; there was no selling of any kind going on, and people walked quietly about the streets, or assembled in small knots at the doorways; the women, too, walked about with uncovered faces, which if they left their own quarter they were obliged to veil. No European face was visible amongst the assembled groups; all were natives—until presently, when, close to the 'house of prayer,' I met an apparently English lady leading a little child by the hand, and presently several others waiting outside the door. It was really quite refreshing to catch a glimpse of European plain costumes after seeing so many gaudy Eastern ones, and the English faces were even more pleasant to look upon. The interior of the meeting-house was much the same as most places of the kind in England. The congregation was necessarily small, all the Europeans in Damascus being, I believe, only a small colony, consisting

of missionaries, their wives, and families. A few natives attended; but, as before observed, the Arabic service was held earlier, when the congregation was much larger than the present one. Those who attended now were the few who understood the English language. The whole service was conducted by a young man stopping at the hotel—an American traveller—both prayers and sermon; he was earnest and good, but not enthusiastic: he used no high-flown language; his discourse was simple, but somewhat too long; but there were truths in it which, doubtless, came home to more hearts than one among tnat small, isolated congregation, so separate, so cut off from the world to work a work for the Lord. How, indeed, could one help respecting their zeal and love for God's service, differ as they might from we Church of England Catholics! Goodness and zeal must generally carry love with it. In the afternoon, after 'breakfast,' we had the Litany service in our own bedroom, and then I returned again to the Christian quarter to call on the head missionary, and hear a little about their work. However he was out, and I met him going to the Arabic catechizing in the chapel, so I accompanied him, and remained for a portion of the service. Every word was in Arabic, so quite incomprehensible to me. There was a species of strangeness in the hymn tunes I had never heard before, but I liked them. The chapel, as I had observed at morning service, was divided by a curtain, which extended from end to end; it was then withdrawn, but now it cut off one half from the other, the women being on one side (out of sight) and the men on the other. The head missionary explained to me that they were obliged to give way to the prejudices of the natives, and hence this division. It was really only the same custom as is directed, if I mistake not, by the rubric of our own Prayer Book (Edward VI.'s First), with, of course, the exception of the curtain.

Time would not permit of my remaining to the end, as I had an engagement with the Commander for a walk; he feeling better, and being anxious to see a little of Damascus. So I quietly crept out in company with one of the young missionaries, who kindly invited me to meet him next day, when he would ride with me round a portion of the city.

On reaching the hotel I found my two companions awaiting me outside, being a little late. Our steps were first directed to the bazaars, through which we wandered towards 'the street which is called Straight.' It bears *the whole title* to this day. The bazaars are separated according to their wares: for instance, there is the arms bazaar where weapons of defence are sold—we walked through this first, and were shown a real Damascus blade—the silversmiths' bazaar, the saddlery bazaar, boot or shoe bazaar, sweetmeat bazaar, book bazaar, &c. In the arms bazaar an Arab was pointed out to us who had married an English lady; some girl, I suppose, who had been well coaching herself up in novels, and turned for the time romantically mad. However, I must be careful what I say, as by this marriage she became quite a public character, and doubtless many who read these words will not only be acquainted with her name, but also the details of this strange affair. I do not know exactly how long ago it was that this alliance took place, and she became 'a dweller in tents.' I need hardly say how interested we were in all the novel sights around us, and the 'bal costumé' appearance of everything. I like to stick to that expression, it suits so well the general actual appearance of persons and things in and around Damascus. The bazaars were not seen to full advantage, for many of the stalls were not open; those owned by Christians, for instance, were closed, and the silversmiths' bazaar was shut up altogether; consequently all could not be advantageously seen until

next day. The chief of all places we visited was the 'street that is called Straight' and the houses of Ananias and Judas. This street is by far the finest in the whole of the extensive city of Damascus, and for the *most part is perfectly straight;* so that the eye can wander up and down its extensive dark avenue for a considerable distance; the greater part of this long, straight street being covered in, with places only at intervals left open to admit daylight and air. The city is not, I was told, healthy, and the effluvia about its streets is far from sweet. This I greatly attribute to the almost universal custom of covering them over. Certainly it is a great means of protection against the piercing rays of as burning a sun as one would at any time care to encounter; but the foul and offensive air has not sufficient vent. The streets themselves are remarkably clean. No offal or anything of the kind is there to disgust, or even offend, the eye; and yet where are the scavengers? You have not far to look for them. They lie about in all directions, stretched at full length asleep; indeed, they are almost under your very feet; and, if you don't keep a sharp look-out, you will soon find yourself on your nose, having fallen over one. These beastly dogs (excuse the expression) are they—yes, they are the scavengers. If it were not for them, Damascus would soon have devastation spread through its streets far and near from the plague or some such fell disease.

The 'street that is called Straight' runs completely through the city, and is just a little under one mile in length. We entered it somewhere about the centre, and had the fullest view obtainable up and down. The right hand led to the house of Judas, and the left to that of Ananias. A considerable distance divides the two. Properly speaking, we should have visited the house of Ananias first; but as that of Judas was closer at hand, we went there first. But after all it was of little consequence, for although the good and holy Ananias is spoken of as a disciple, it was to the

house of Judas that St. Paul was first led, after what had befallen him on his way from Jerusalem. As we walked down the 'street that is called Straight,' I referred to the story in my Bible, for the benefit of my companions as well as myself. Let us now do the same as we walk over again in imagination the same truly interesting ground. I feel there is no need of an apology in referring to this most wonderful and miraculous story; for was it not here, on this very spot, where that most eventful and most momentous life to all Christians commenced? save, of course, one only, to which no comparison can ever be made. Up to this time the man Saul was the very individual first and foremost in persecuting the followers of Christ, and all who loved Jesus. It was he even who held the clothes of the young men who martyred the holy St. Stephen. Everywhere he went he was noted for his zeal in the persecutions of the Christians, and yet he, of all men, was ordained to be the chosen vessel of Almighty God. And what a noble, undaunted soldier of the Lord's he turned out to be; what mighty deeds in His name he performs, and how bravely he preaches the Word of God throughout the world; how many thousands of converts he brings over to Christianity; how unflinchingly he bears being stoned, being tortured in the stocks (unlike the stocks of modern times), and being beaten with many stripes! He bears all cheerfully, almost exultingly, for the Master's sake whom he loved and served, and for whom at last he gloriously lays down his life. How wonderful indeed are the workings of God, and His deeds are past finding out. But to our story.

Saul was 'yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord,' when he went to the High Priest in Jerusalem, and asked him for letters of introduction to the chiefs of the synagogue at Damascus, authorising him, if he met with any Christians there, either men or women, to make them prisoners, and bring them to

Jerusalem. His request having been granted, he starts off on the long journey to Damascus (about 140 miles by the road, I should think), armed with his authority for carrying out to the full his persecution against the holy sect he hated and despised. On he and his followers journeyed through Judæa, Samaria, and Galilee. Damascus is in sight at last. Little did he imagine the great event which was about to happen—an event that was to cause such a vast turning-point in his whole life, and make him so entirely a new man. 'And as he journeyed, he came near Damascus: and suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven.' His alarm at such a phenomenon must have been extreme; what could be the meaning or cause of this awfully bright illumination? He falls flat to the earth, and hears himself addressed by an unearthly voice, which says to him, 'Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me?' He tremblingly replies, 'Who art Thou, Lord?' The heavenly voice answers, 'I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks.' Saul, astonished and trembling, said, 'Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do? And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do. And the men which journeyed with him stood speechless, hearing a voice, but seeing no man.' After the voice had ceased, Saul got up from the ground and opened his eyes; but he was totally blind, and in this state he was led by the hand and brought into the city of Damascus, to the house of one called Judas. For three days he was without sight, and neither eat nor drank. In Damascus, at this time, there lived a man called Ananias, a Christian; and to him said the Lord in a vision, Ananias! And he said, Behold, I am here, Lord.' I should mention here, that Ananias' house was situated close to the 'street called Straight,' about two or three minutes' walk only from it. 'And the Lord said unto him, Arise and go

into the street which is called Straight, and enquire in the house of Judas for one called Saul, of Tarsus ; for, behold, he prayeth.' Saul also had had a vision, in which he had seen this very man come to him to restore his sight, and the same was shortly about to be realised. Ananias, having heard of all the harm Saul had done in Jerusalem to the Christians, seems to wonder much at the direction from the Lord to go and heal his sight; and more especially, perhaps, as he knew he had brought written authority to continue his persecutions. 'But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel.' Ananias accordingly goes forth to do the Lord's bidding, and walking down this very street we are now traversing, enters the house of Judas, and approaches Saul, saying, 'Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost.' The deed is done, the soldier enlisted, and Saul from henceforth to the end becomes wholly the Lord's. 'And immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales: and he received sight forthwith, and arose, and was baptised.' He then broke his fast, ate meat, and was strengthened. Yes, he was strengthened in more ways than one. Ah, good, holy, brave St. Paul! I envy that strength of thine; would that this weak frail form of mine were endued with even a portion of *it*! Brave Saint! brave martyr! I envy thee; why, oh, why cannot I follow in thy holy steps, and serve my Lord with the same courage, with the same endurance, that thou didst? I know, I feel, that there is no love like unto the love of Jesus ; then why permit the world and its fleeting loves to tear me away from Him? Holy St. Paul! *holy monk*! I again repeat I envy thee; and this street which is called Straight, I thank thee, for calling to my mind these thoughts,

as in imagination I once more wander along thy shady lengths.

St. Paul, after his baptism and enlistment in the army of the Lord Jesus, remained some days in Damascus 'with the disciples,' or Christians, there; during which time he was not idle, but went about preaching that Christ 'is the son of God.' How amazed and astonished everybody was, and said, 'Is not this he that destroyed them which called on this name in Jerusalem, and came hither for that intent, that he might bring them bound unto the chief priests?' I have no time to ponder on the most interesting history of this wonderful man's life. My story of our trip in Syria I feel has been long enough, and it is very nearly time I brought it to a close; there is the possibility of having even too much of a 'good thing'—not that this story of ours, as it has been related, may be so considered—and I fear I must have already wearied my reader; however, let him bear with me yet a little longer.

I will just hurriedly finish the review of St. Paul's life, as far as it is concerned with the city in which we are at present rambling. He increased more and more in power, 'and confounded the Jews which dwelt in Damascus, proving that this is very Christ.' It appears that he now left Damascus for a time, and went to Arabia, that he might preach among the heathen; and that he did not go to Jerusalem at present, because the Apostles were working there, and his services would consequently not be needed so much as among the savages in Arabia; and therefore he says, 'I went into Arabia' (Gal. i. 16–18); and from Arabia he returned to Damascus. It was then he relates (2 Cor. xi. 32, 33), 'In Damascus the governor under Aretas the king kept the city of the Damascenes with a garrison, desirous to apprehend me: And through a window in a basket was I let down by the wall, and escaped his hands.' St. Luke also, in writing the Acts of the Apostles,

gives much the same account of this event (Acts ix. 23–25): he says, 'After that many days were fulfilled, the Jews took counsel to kill him: But their laying await was known of Saul. And they watched the gates day and night to kill him. Then the disciples took him by night, and let him down by the wall in a basket.' It was now after three years that St. Paul returned to Jerusalem, and 'assayed to join himself to the disciples: but they were all afraid of him, and believed not that he was a disciple.' Thus there is the story of the commencement of the eventful and most wonderful career of this great apostle and saint. Perhaps I should remark, for the benefit of my less well-informed readers, that Saul was a Hebrew name, and that the name Paul belonged to him as a Roman citizen.

The traditionary house of Judas into which our guide conducted us may or may not be the one where St. Paul was led—there is nothing to prove it so or not—therefore, for our own satisfaction, let us imagine it to be the genuine house. It is now turned into a small Turkish mosque. From this we were led through the greater part of the street that is called Straight to the house of Ananias; but on the way we were taken up to the roofs of some buildings to see the 'Triumphal Arch,' a very ancient and grand old piece of antiquity, rising above the houses; its beauty and sculptures are well worth a visit, but I regret I am not competent to give a just and true description of this magnificent specimen of antique art. From this we continued down the street that is called Straight, and turning to the left, came to the house of Ananias, into which we had to descend by several stone steps. It is a cave fitted up as a chapel by the Terra Santa monks. As to the genuineness of the tradition I cannot give an opinion. During our ramble we were shown into a Syrian church, the interior of which is the first I had ever seen. I did not observe in the casual inspection any difference to the Greek

church. I noticed no images, but only pictorial representations of holy people. The Grand Mosque we were not permitted to enter. I was about to place one foot within 'the sacred' precincts, but was soon told to keep back. Our next desire was to see the gardens, which were some little distance away. Before going thither, we each refreshed ourselves with some iced sherbet, grateful indeed to our heated bodies. There was a strong flavour of liquorice-root in it. We had some little distance to go before reaching the gardens, but their beauty fully repaid us for the walk. Branches of the Abana wound their way through the thick foliage of the numerous variety of trees, and what with the gay costumes of the people, another scene from the 'Arabian Nights' could soon be conjured up or imagined to be before us. Picturesque groups of Jewesses, &c., &c, occupied the walks; but we had not much time or opportunity to look about us; our commander, having over-fatigued himself, becoming again very unwell, I was most anxious to return to the hotel. We rested for a short time by a bridge that crossed one of these branches of the Abana, and departed homeward.

Five canals are led off from the river Abana, and fountains sparkle in almost every building in Damascus. The other river of Damascus—the Pharpar—does not approach to the city within some miles, and certainly it has no need of it. The great and unknown antiquity of Damascus, and its flourishing in all ages and under every dynasty, may be attributed to the abundant supply of water, which never fails; and to the same cause may also be attributed the garden-like fertility of the very lovely plain in the midst of which the grand old city raises its domes and minarets.

I had read about the city before I visited it, and had conceived the idea that a portion of it was in ruins, and one of my first desires was to visit these ruins. I found myself quite mistaken; for, after I had roamed about

amongst its ancient streets, both on foot as well as on horseback, I saw but few ruins, save the old wall around the city, whose stones were crumbling into dust; for no sooner does one house fall from age than another rises over its ashes. One case in point was brought before my notice: there had been a ruin, but the workmen were busily employed in erecting a new building over the spot; and so it has been in ages past, and promises to continue from age to age. The heavy crushing hand of time, which has levelled most of the cities of the world since this sprang into existence, seems here to have had no weight, and been suspended and withheld in his destructive powers.

Our walk back to the hotel was long and tedious, especially as we had an invalid with us who must have found the walking painful over the rough broken stones. There being no wheeled conveyance in Damascus, there is no great necessity to pave the streets with smoothness; as they are, they do very well for camels and other beasts of burthen employed within its precincts, but are certainly not pleasant for foot passengers. As caravans arrive in from Aleppo, Palmyra, and other places far away across the desert, doubtless after their rough and exhausting journeys they look upon Damascus as almost perfection. We, however, most certainly did not as far as the paving of some of its streets went. I must not omit to mention a great curiosity in the city—namely, the gigantic plane-tree situated in its very midst. Of course it is always pointed out to travellers, but still at the same time I do not quite see how they could well miss seeing it, pointed out or not. Its age must be very great, to judge from its gnarled and knotty appearance. It is nearly forty feet in circumference.

I was very glad, indeed, to get back to the hotel and see our invalid safely in bed—poor man! the walk was the cause of a painful return of sickness.

Her morganatic Majesty, the Queen of Denmark, who had been at the same hotel with me in Jerusalem, was once again at the same one with me here at Damascus. I had the honour of making Her Majesty's acquaintance, and also that of her lady companion. I had also the honour of exchanging cards with both ladies previous to their departure from Damascus. It gives me great pleasure in mentioning how extremely affable and agreeable they were in conversation at table and elsewhere, and how very kind and attentive the Countess de Danner's companion was in offering remedies for our invalid, and which certainly gave him temporary relief. A place for him in the diligence had been secured for next day, but it was now quite out of the question his being able to undertake the journey, and consequently the fare had to be forfeited.

Becoming no better towards evening, I enquired and found that there was a good French doctor in Damascus, and he, at the patient's wish, was sent for; and the next day our invalid became much better, and was able to return with us to Beyrout on Tuesday, the day following. The securing him a place was a fortunate accident. On going to the office to obtain the seat, I was told that all the places in the diligence were taken; but the two American gentlemen already mentioned had previously told me they were only going as far as Stora, being bound to Baalbek, and from Damascus to Stora there was a vacant place in the banketta, taken by a gentleman coming from Baalbek. All these seats had to be paid for the whole journey; but it just suited us nicely; for the commander could travel with us in the banketta as far as Stora, and then go into the intérieur when the two gentlemen parted company.

We passed our Sunday evening quietly in reading and writing, and retired to rest somewhere between 10 and 11 P.M.; and glad I was to get into bed behind the shelter of the mosquito curtains, after I had seen the French

doctor, and was satisfied that there was nothing very wrong —he came in military uniform, riding on a donkey provided by the messenger we sent. Thus closed my first day in the oldest city in the world.

CHAPTER VII.

DAMASCUS—SECOND DAY.

My first thought on turning out at about 6 A.M. was to start off at once for the diligence office and secure the places we required, which accordingly I did, after partaking of my usual early refreshment of coffee, bread, and honey. It was on the way that my guide was informed that four Christians had been murdered in their beds. Druses, I think, were the culprits. I was *too early* and *too late* at the diligence office; it was closed. So, I suppose, after the vehicle leaves at four in the morning the clerk also leaves, shutting up, and going home for another forty winks. I was more successful at a later visit. The day was quite chilly, with a high wind blowing; a violent change from the day before. There being no daily papers or news to read of a morning in Damascus, I was ready at an early hour to start on a ramble and purchasing expedition through the bazaars. I did not give myself much rest while in the city, and felt but little inclined while in so deeply interesting a place to let the grass grow under my feet for want of energy and movement. It was very unlikely that I should ever again have such a golden opportunity, and I cared not to lose a minute of time. The romance of being in Damascus had not yet worn off, and I seemed quite to glory in roaming about the crowded streets of this grand and isolated old city, standing in the midst of these beautiful green plains—interspersed with sparkling streams and fountains—and the deep and rapid river Abana meandering

among the trees and luxuriant foliage, while the 'howling desert' bordered its confines.

The streets always seemed crowded, and mostly by a set of lazy, turban-headed Moslems, who seemed to have nothing to do but to smoke, talk, and sip coffee. If one wishes to learn a lesson in luxurious idleness, let him take a trip to Damascus, or indeed to any other Eastern city. Even in those who are supposed to be busily employed there is a certain nonchalance, no care kind of an air, as they slowly prosecute their work, that one seldom sees elsewhere. The first sight of real interest I saw this morning was the murderers' prison; and I may truthfully say I never had seen such a one before. In a square court or open cage I looked through bars and saw about one hundred murderers, or perhaps more properly speaking, wild beasts. Although they were safe behind the bars, I had an instinctive dread of going too near—the same kind of feeling one might experience in approaching a lion's den in the Zoological Gardens. I paused to look at some of their features. Murder seemed to hover about their flashing, eager, restless eyes, and beetle brows; some of their dark faces were such that I cannot pretend to convey a right idea of them. And these caged murderous savages may be taken as a fair sample of the many hundreds which hover about both within and without Damascus. At the very thought one almost intuitively feels for the handle of his sword and grasps his revolver. In spite of the feeling of dread so natural while one's gaze wandered among this herd of murderers, a species of fascination seemed to hover over the horrible crowd, so that one had even some difficulty to tear himself away. Some were heavily manacled. One I noticed in particular—a nigger—a heavy-built, dreadful-looking man, and doubtless a fearful antagonist to meet unless well armed; no pity, or any other kind of softness, lurked in the steady stare of his wicked and merciless eyes. The mode

of conveying persons to execution in this city, like many other customs, here is novel. The culprit is dragged along like a pig through the streets, and is 'run up,' kicking and struggling, to a projecting beam of one of the houses. A place was pointed out to me in one of the streets where an execution had lately taken place. But I do not think that nearly all murderers are hanged—indeed, I fancy many are not—otherwise, perhaps, there would not be quite so much murdering going on about here. From this I went and paid a short visit to the thieves' prison; they numbered hundreds, some of whom were very villanous-looking ruffians, but more respectable in appearance, if I may use such a word in connection with such rascals, than the occupants of the murderers' prison. One had his head cut open and bandaged up, which served to add to his repulsiveness. There was one here who asked charity of me, on the plea of being a Christian; but I need hardly say such-like 'charity,' I care not to support.

We now walked off to the bazaars, which were to-day clothed in their best attire. I was anxious to make some purchases, and of course had to place myself in the hands of my guide, to be taken where, in his estimation, was best. I was afterwards told by the Countess de Danner that all these fellows get a percentage on whatever is bought; consequently, when a certain allowance is made for cheating, as well as a fair profit to the seller, and the percentage to the guide, one cannot expect to get things very cheap. However, on the whole, I do not think I did badly. The transacting of business occupied the whole forenoon, and I returned to the hotel with my cargo of silk-work, sweetmeats, &c. While in the bazaars I was accosted by a military *gentleman* in uniform, who turned out to be a policeman, or something of that kind. I received from him an acknowledgment for my services of the previous day in rescuing the Christian. The secret came out now how

it was so easily accomplished. My guide interpreted, and said the crowd had taken me for the British Consul, and hence had so quietly relinquished their prisoner. Well, I felt pretty thankful for the mistake, and congratulated myself. Our Consul is much respected in Damascus, and is a man well able to support his authority. His wife knows how to support hers also, and is a lady of considerable strength of mind, and more especially so, if I may believe a story I was told in which she was the heroine. Women are greatly despised in the East, and not the least so in Damascus, where I did not, during my short stay, see as much as a woman spoken to by a man—the two sexes appeared to keep altogether aloof one from the other, the men looking down upon the women as an inferior race to themselves. Well, as the story reached me, it appeared that the Consul's wife, Mrs. Burton, while riding one day, had the way blocked by a number of men who cared not to move for 'only a woman;' and she, in a truly spirited manner, gave them such a lesson as doubtless many will remember for some time to come. She took the law completely into her own hands, and administered condign punishment with her riding-whip to all within reach. The crowd of ill-mannered rascals must indeed have been thoroughly astonished at thus being unmercifully thrashed by *a woman* and a Christian. Such a lesson they had never been taught before, and never again would they attempt either to interfere with an English lady or bar her passage.

I think I am not too severe when I say that the Moslem is a most despicable race. Most are apparently very religious, but their religion seems to teach them nothing that is good; it places no restraint whatever upon their passions, and they swear and pray, and pray and swear. Dr. Thompson, in 'The Land and the Book,' alludes to this:—'What is that man quarrelling about with his companion? Shall I translate this last explosion of wrath? "May God

curse your grandfather, and the father of your great-grandfather! *Can't you give a man time to pray?* I want to pray!" Preposterous! Which, the swearing or the praying? Both. Both together are certainly preposterous enough; and yet this scene and language are so familiar that I should not have noticed them if you had not called my attention that way.' And this is the people who rule Syria. It would perhaps be difficult to choose between Druses and Moslems as to ruffianism. I suppose that nothing could exceed the murderous rascality of the Druses; they are dreadful murderers and cut-throats. The Rev. J. L. Porter relates an incident which occurred in a neighbouring village, in a house where the Consul was. The why and the wherefore of the dreadful deed I cannot say. A young man and his wife resided in the house, when one day some Druses rushed in, tore the young man from his wife's arms, and brutally murdered him, leaving the mangled corpse in the room. The poor young fellow had received a frightful gash across the face, his tongue was severed, and his head almost separated from the body.

Our present Consul-General at Beyrout also relates a story which happened to himself, in which some Druses made their way into his very room, and endeavoured to awe him into giving his sanction to and conniving at a second massacre of the Christians. I need hardly say they were foiled in their hellish wish. But all these things prove what a state the country is in, and the constant danger hovering over the heads of the poor Christians. As a rule, I think, residents try and hide somewhat the condition of things; but the truth will out: and when one hears of even ladies being armed with revolvers, as I heard of one who was going a journey to or in the vicinity of Damascus, there must be something very wrong. But how can there be comfort or security in such a misruled country, trodden down and oppressed by the Turk? My

engagement with my new-found missionary friend was for 2 P.M., so I had ample time to despatch a good noon-day breakfast, and make preparations for an equestrian tour. The hired steed was in waiting about 1·30 P.M. I mounted and rode leisurely through the city in company with my guide to the Christian quarter. The entrance to the missionary's house was down a small blind alley, and by a small door at the further end. The approach was certainly far from inviting, but the interior belied the exterior. I was shown into a kind of half drawing-room, half library. Here I sat talking for some time with my newly-made friend. He had English newspapers lying about his room; certainly they may not have been of very modern date, but still, from the general appearance of things around, one might almost imagine himself in some young curate's domicile in old England, had there not been a certain kind of sporting atmosphere about the room, caused by a double-barrelled breech-loader gun on the wall, and other appendages. But I am not aware that the young missionary gave up any of his time to such employments or amusements; but in Damascus it is very necessary to be armed and prepared against any emergency. He showed me his gun; it was loaded in both barrels. He quite smiled at my pretty little four-barrelled rifled pistol, and deemed it of little use in an encounter with horsemen; but he let me understand that the very appearance of a gun carried respect with it, while a pistol looked insignificant. I fully felt the force of his argument; but still, at the same time, I would rather be excused from carrying about with me wherever I went a heavy rifle slung over my shoulder. However, in the missionary district visiting over the neighbouring villages it is very necessary, not only to carry means of defence, but to appear well ready for an encounter. Mr. —— was a strongly-built man, and he related to me a scrimmage he had once had when attacked by robbers, he

being at the time unarmed. He used his fists to such effect that he came off victorious; but this must have been an unusual exception to the rule, and I would strongly recommend no one to depend on such a mode for protection, however good a pugilist he may be ; for, generally speaking, simple muscle and pluck is but a weak antagonist against a leaden bullet from a rifle. The great thing all over Syria is to be armed and appear armed—the last is most important for warding off attacks. A good, brightly-polished Colt's or Dean and Adam's revolver, simply from its appearance, is a great protection. Fully-armed, mounted Bedouin robbers will ride past a person carrying such an article with scarcely a look, while, if he be unarmed, he will not only perhaps have to hand over all his property, but even the very clothes he wears, being left naked. I have repeatedly passed such robbers, and would have been very sorry to have met with them unprotected. The good missionaries of Damascus, in their district visiting, have other enemies to dread besides these—viz., bugs, fleas, and other vermin ; their bites are most venomous, and raise great lumps. My friend described to me the horror of these creatures, and the various attempts he had made to defend himself against their fierce attacks, while sleeping out in villages or hamlets. He was now in the habit of taking about with him a portable iron bedstead. These dreaded animals were thus in a way foiled, for they could not, or did not, climb up the iron legs, but were unfortunately more successful in another way—they got up on to the ceiling, and dropped down on their victim. These Syrian bugs and fleas are really wonderful creatures for their cleverness and sagacity. Mr. ——'s Arab steed being now in readiness, we made a move, after I had been introduced to his wife, and had seen his children. I was first conducted to the native schools—boys. Time being limited, I could not spare much for them, unfortunately. There were three

schools—for big boys, for smaller, and for yet smaller ones. All seemed busy, and moderately clean; some read, some wrote. Those who read aloud to me did so in English, and very fairly; but it was difficult to follow them without a book. They *spoke* but very little English, and, indeed, I see not that it is necessary for them to learn our language: the great object of all is to so educate them that they may become useful, honest men in their own country. These boys and children are educated gratuitously, not having to pay even a nominal sum of money; and, indeed, I was told that many of their parents were so poor that, if they were called upon to pay anything at all, their children would be withdrawn from the school. The girls' schools were close by, superintended by ladies. The girls, apparently, were more numerous than the boys. I noted down the respective numbers, but unfortunately have lost my memorandum; in one class, or school, I think we counted about seventy-eight. The industrial school was also numerously attended, but I do not think *it* contained so large a number as that. The work (fancy work) handed me for inspection was very good, and in some cases very prettily and cleverly done. How deeply interesting was all this, and more especially when one thought of what would become of all these children, both boys and girls, if they were permitted to grow up savages and infidels! And then, too, the great difficulty which attended the first getting these little people to be allowed to come to the schools. District visiting is bad enough in some of our own low neighbourhoods, both in London and other large towns, and in many cases very uphill work; and I am sure most district visitors will agree with me in the difficulty of obtaining the consent of parents to allow their children to attend either night, Sunday, or other schools, and how much one is frequently discouraged before getting in the thin end of the wedge. From the very little experience I have in such

matters as district visiting, I can speak of its disappointments and discouragements; but here, away in Damascus and the surrounding desert, how difficult indeed is such. There was life to risk here, and discomforts and obstacles of all kinds. The missionaries, both men and women, were not idle in the work. Of course the out-visiting would necessarily have to be done by the men, and even that within Damascus; but very little, I expect, could be done by ladies; the dens to be visited would be no sinecure. From the schools the two missionaries (who accompanied me) and myself were conducted into the house of the head lady-superintendent by the lady herself, where coffee was served, and the young lady who superintended the industrial school joining us, we made quite a nice little sociable party. The elder lady (Miss J——), having a brother a naval officer, seemed glad to speak on nautical matters to one of the same cloth; but what with eating biscuits, sipping coffee, and laughing and talking, valuable time slipped by very rapidly. Before leaving, I was shown into an adjoining room fitted up as a chapel. The carving, gilding, and painting of the walls, cornices, door, &c., were quite chaste and elegant. Such a show and so much display greatly surprised me in connection with a Presbyterian chapel, knowing that such things do not generally coincide with the ideas of Presbyterians; certainly as far as 'places of worship' are concerned. The fact of the matter was, that the house had not always been occupied by its present owner or tenant, but had formerly belonged to some wealthy Jew, and this room had possibly been a reception-room. The general display of wealth which adorns the interior of the Jews' houses at Damascus is such as, I suppose, could nowhere else be seen; thousands of pounds are expended in these adornments. The one under present discussion may be taken as a poor sample of the generality. The number of large, magnificent, and palatial residences in

Damascus is stated to be above 500, all being built on much the same plan as the hotel; in the centre being an inner court or quadrangle, with a large square pond or basin of water, with a sparkling fountain diffusing its refreshing coolness into the heated atmosphere; while the thick foliage of orange-trees, laden with their heavy golden fruit, spread around their grateful shade; and the delicious perfume of the orange-blossom mingling with the air makes the little spot quite a small paradise or fairy-land. It seems quite a peculiarity with the orange-tree that it is both loaded with fruit and blossom at the same time. The rooms of some of these houses are described as being perfectly splendid. Of course during my short visit to grand old Damascus there was much I was forced to pass over without seeing. The interior of the Jews' houses, for instance, I missed. I was very busy in walking and riding about, trying to see all I could, and get as much information as possible; but a person cannot see London in a day, nor can he Damascus. Indeed I think the saying of some foreigner or other who had lately returned from a visit to London would well suit Damascus. On being asked what he thought of London, he replied that 'he could not see it for houses.' So with Damascus: one can little imagine the extent of the city until he rises on an eminence above the houses, and then views it with calmness and thoughtfulness. Well, we shall presently have such a view.

Relative to these grand houses, the one thing so unaccountable is their miserable approaches. To the one we were at present in the approach was simply—I must use the expression—beastly, and the effluvia disgusting. I really almost feared that, while standing without, waiting for the crazy, cracked old door to be opened, that I should —to say the very least of it—be none the better for inhaling such an impure atmosphere reeking with fetid filth. But,

on entering, what a change! everything so sweet and clean; the refreshing fountain in the centre of the quadrangle, and the bright, cheerful neat rooms around; and last, though not least, the smiling kind faces of the English ladies to welcome one. The elder gentleman of the three missionaries was the only one that was in Damascus during the Christian massacre, and he was not actually in the city at the time, but returning from the country, when the awful deed had been committed, and thousands of Christ's followers murdered; he found the whole Christian quarter a smouldering ruin, and his brother-missionary a corpse. In spite of this terrific drama, the Christians' houses have been again built, and they have re-established themselves over the very spot where their murdered brethren in the Lord once lived; but the one sad, sad thing for Christianity in Damascus is, that there are so many black sheep in the small isolated flock. It is this, and let it be sorrowfully remarked, that is one great cause of the finger of scorn being levelled at the whole community by the savage and cruel herd of Druses and Moslems, our Lord's enemies and the devil's friends. 'If ye are buffeted for your faults, what thank have ye?' Would that it were otherwise! and of all places, Damascus is one where brave and faithful soldiers are needed for our Lord's service. But God knows best; the devil is rampant there at present, going about as a roaring lion; it will not be for ever; the time will come, and even now is not far distant, when he will be crushed and cast down into the bottomless pit.

May I ask one short, earnest, imploring prayer from all those who read these words, that God in His mercy may protect and guard the Christians in Damascus; that they may be truly and entirely His; that the missionaries and the Mission Society there may be endowed with such strength in their painful uphill work that they may never tire or faint by the way, but that, through their endeavours, many

faithful and brave soldiers may be added to the little struggling army surrounded by so many dangers as well as deadly enemies; and may they endure unto the end for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen, amen.

Bidding farewell, perhaps for ever, to these schools and the kind good ladies who kept them, we mounted our horses and rode out of the city, by Thomas's Gate I think it was called. We then skirted the outside wall, an extremely ancient piece of antiquity, and in a very tumble-down state in some places, while in others dwellings were built into it, doubtless in the same manner as they were when St. Paul was here and let down at night in a basket.

The road was much broken; possibly in past ages it may have been a smooth causeway, but for many years, perhaps centuries, it had received no kind of repair or mending. The Turks destroy; they do not build. Riding on, we came to a very peculiar-looking burial-place, the tombs being heaped and jumbled together in a very promiscuous manner; not a bit of anything green being amongst or near them caused a very strange appearance. Some women amongst these tombs were wailing, and apparently they were genuine, not hired mourners. From this we walked our horses to the Eastern Gate; we paused here, for it was an interesting piece of antiquity. The larger and wider portion, through which the chariots must have passed to and fro, is walled up, only a narrow entrance on the right being now available for passengers. This gate is at the commencement of the street that is called Straight. On either side of the roadway are the remains of Corinthian columns, which serve to show the, at one time, great breadth of the roadway for chariots, but which is now very much narrowed by houses being built over the causeway. From traces that still remain, the street that is called Straight must have been a very grand one, very straight and very broad, with, on either side, a colonnade for foot passengers, reaching

with its beautiful Corinthian columns the whole length of the street, possibly then more than a mile in extent, but now just a little piece short of a mile. The street now is not what it was then, and one cannot imagine in its present condition chariots being driven up and down with their proud, prancing horses; there would barely be room now for a single one to pass up and down its narrow length, and permit foot passengers passing to and fro in safety. Entering the gate, we resigned for a time our horses. It was here, from the top of a minaret, that a grand view of the whole city of Damascus was obtainable. We had to bend low, and creep through a hole to a dark spiral stone staircase, up which, and round and round which, we climbed until we reached a small balcony encircling the minaret, and most conveniently affording a view from every quarter, both of the city and the plain. This city, then, spread out before us like a map, is Damascus, situated in the very midst of its beauteous plain; and that river flowing through it, or perhaps more properly by its side, is the Abana; the Pharpar is some distance away, and not included in this picture. An Eastern poet has described it (Damascus) 'as a diamond encircled by emeralds;' and it is universally admitted by Arabian writers to be the loveliest of the four terrestrial paradises. 'Gorgeous are thy palaces, fragrant are thy gardens, sweet are thy waters, O Damascus, thou Queen of the East!' Murray describes the first sight of the city as the view bursts upon the traveller from another quarter; but I doubt if any could exceed the one that surprised me when I landed at the summit of the minaret after my dark climb. He describes the change of scene as 'so sudden, so unexpected, that it seems like some glorious vision. The gorge of the Abana is at our feet, and we see that the river is the source of all that richness and beauty. That ravine is a real *cornucopia*, pouring out a perennial flood of flowers and fruit upon the

broad plain. The peculiar forms of Eastern architecture do not bear close inspection, but they look like an Arabian poet's dream when seen from afar. Tapering minarets and swelling domes, tipped with golden crescents, rise up in every direction from the confused mass of white terraced roofs; while in some places their glittering tops appear above the deep green foliage, like diamonds in the midst of emeralds. In the centre of the city stands the Great Mosque, and near it are the towers of the Castle.'

The minaret on which we were perched certainly afforded a view one could hardly ever forget after once seeing. Immediately at our backs commenced the plain, waving with the luxuriance of its trees—pomegranate, poplar, lofty cone-like cypress, apricot, olive, with here and there a tall feathery palm rearing its graceful head above its fellows. Before us was the bright city, and far beyond bare desert hills stood out in the full glare of the glorious Eastern sun. The softness and almost aërial beauty of the picture naturally enchants the beholder. Yes, here lies that wonderful city, so old that its age is unknown. 'Twice has it been the capital of great empires. At one time its monarch ruled from the shores of the Atlantic to the banks of the Indus. Six different races have possessed it, and its history may thus be divided into six periods. During the first period of 1,450 years it was independent. The Babylonian and Persian monarchs held it for a second period of 417 years. It was under Grecian rule a third period of 248 years. The Romans possessed it a fourth period of 699 years. The Saracens occupied it a fifth period of 441 years. Lastly, it fell into the hands of the Turks, who still retain it. But this power is declining, and the sixth period of Damascus history is fast drawing to a close.' To attempt to describe piecemeal the view of the city from where we stand would be almost impossible—there is such a jumble of minarets, domes, &c., that

it really becomes quite confusing, and one scarcely knows where first to rest the eye. Away on the right, amidst the thick of the city, is the Great Mosque, 650 feet long by 150 wide. On the north side is a court, round which are cloisters, in the front of which are arches supported by pillars of granite, limestone, and marble. The mosque itself was once a Christian cathedral dedicated to St. John the Baptist, as it is said that beneath was found the head of that holy man preserved in a golden casket. Khâled, when the city was captured, historians inform us, insisted on being allowed admission to the holy cave. When he descended, he found a small vault with an altar, on which was a casket. On it was an inscription in Greek to the following effect :—'This casket contains the head of John the Baptist, son of Zachariah.' This Grand Mosque and the Castle are the two chief objects in our view ; but, besides, there are a very great number of other mosques and chapels—the mosques for the most part have courts in front of them. The variety of churches includes Greek, Maronite, Syrian, and Armenian. The bazaars consist of many trades, each trade a bazaar, occupying great space in the city. Some of the khans are large buildings. The principal khan is a magnificent structure of black and white marble, and is one of the finest specimens of Moorish architecture in the world. The pasha's residence is fortified and in the centre of the city, and near it is a large citadel. The view *in toto* is one whose equal perhaps I may never see again, and consequently I was very reluctant to drag myself away from contemplating it.

The trade of Damascus is extensive. It used to be celebrated for its manufacture of sabres, of such peculiar quality as to be perfectly elastic. It is still distinguished for these, but the oldest are considered the best. There are considerable factories of silk and cotton work here ; soap is largely made ; also leather, cabinet-work, saddlery, and

jewellery. The jewellery bazaar is a melancholy-looking place, with very little to be seen until you stop before some stall, when an assortment is soon dragged from some drawer and exposed for your admiring gaze. In one case, some precious stone or other was held out for my inspection. On my pretending to misunderstand the man, thank him, and walk off with it, and then, on being followed, declare I did not understand Arabic, and I was not going to give up a present, there was considerable anxiety apparent as to whether the prized stone would be returned or not. I may as well here remark, for the information of anyone who intends to visit Damascus hereafter, that strangers are asked four or five times the real value for articles; but, by judiciously bargaining, the price falls considerably; but even then one is cheated, and indeed often you cannot buy things for their actual worth. I am certainly not a new hand at this kind of thing, but I think it is quite probable I myself was cheated. One respectable merchant, a man of much wealth, on selling me an article for 35 francs, declared he lost 5 francs by the transaction. My bargain doubtless was a good one; but, at the same time, I think it very improbable he would part with his wares at an actual loss to himself.

A large portion of the trade of Damascus is kept up by constant communication with cities across the desert by means of the caravans which frequently arrive during the year, 'bringing dried fruits and sweetmeats, slippers, coffee-kettles, horse-shoes, nails, tobacco-pipes, spiceries, shawls, and the rich fabrics of Surat, through Bagdad; iron, tin, cochineal, broadcloth, sugar, and such other European articles as are required in the city, through Saida, Beyrout, and Tripoli. Commerce is kept up chiefly by caravans, the principal of which is that which goes annually to Mecca with the pilgrims to that city.'[1] But, I think, we have

[1] Beeton.

been long enough up here in this our exalted position; although, if time would only permit, gladly would we remain yet a little longer in the deep contemplation of the splendid panorama, and continue still further our ruminations.

Having accomplished the dark and difficult descent, we vaulted into our saddles, making our exit by the East Gate, to continue our ride outside the city wall. Close here is the leper hospital, said to have been once the house of Naaman the Syrian. *It possibly* might occupy its site, but looks far too modern to be the actual house. I was informed while in the city that the air of Damascus had a peculiarly beneficial effect for lepers, who came on purpose to enjoy its properties. If I am not mistaken—and I always try not to make statements with too positive assertions—my informant declared that lepers even became cured in Damascus. However that may be, I did not observe a single leper *in* the city *or outside*—not even at the house of Naaman. Further on we came to some waste ground, to the left of which is the Christian cemetery. The tomb of St. George is nearer to the walls. At the further end of the Christian cemetery leading from the city is *placed* the spot where St. Paul was converted; but whoever placed it there, I think, must have been very much out in his calculations; for what could St. Paul have wanted this side of the city when coming from Jerusalem? It seems that 'the spot' *has* been moved once, for the convenience of pilgrims, and, I think, the sooner it is moved again the better. Very near the tomb of St. George is Bab Rîzân—a walled-up gateway. This is where St. Paul is said to have been let down in a basket when he made his escape; but it seems that no reliance can be placed on the tradition. Mr. W——, my missionary friend, pointed out to me some Saracenic inscriptions on the uppermost stones. The wall all along this part of the city skirted the Jews' quarter. We, for a time, turned our horses' tails to Damascus, and proceeded to

visit the Protestant cemetery, first fording a small stream, the bridge being considerably out of repair, indeed so much so that some of the centre had gone altogether. The Protestant cemetery is a small square patch of ground. The Rev. W. Graham's tomb is here—the good missionary who was murdered during the massacre. Another lonely grave was also pointed out to me, that of the wife of one of the present missionaries—quite a young man. Poor fellow! how sad for him such a loss; and here, as it were, away from the world, to lose his helpmate, his friend, the wife of his bosom! Ah! well, 'Man is born to sorrow as the sparks fly upward,' and in others' sorrows let us bear with patience our own woes; none can be free here, for this is not our home. Riding back, Mr. W—— pointed out to me the general grave of the Christians who had been massacred. It has been stated that on the 9th, 10th, and 11th July, 1860, at least 2,500 adult male Christians were murdered *in Damascus*; but although much trouble was taken in making lists of the dead, a correct estimate can hardly be arrived at. The fearful massacre extended to the villages around Damascus; 'but no estimate of the numbers actually murdered can give an adequate idea of the terrible results of those massacres. Thousands who escaped the sword of the assassin died of fright, of wounds, of famine, or of subsequent privations. Those murdered were men mostly in the prime of life, the only support of wives and children. Their houses were burned; their property was swept away; all means of support taken from them. The survivors were driven away homeless, penniless, and in many cases naked and wounded. Many of the women and girls were seized by inhuman murderers, and condemned to the worst of all forms of slavery.'[1] In 1868 one-third of the houses in the Christian quarter are described as being still in

[1] Murray.

ruins, the other two-thirds only partially rebuilt. In 1871 I did not see any ruins, nor were any pointed out to me.

The epitaph on the general tomb, where sleep the murdered Christians, is to this effect, in Arabic :—'See what you have done unto us; may the Lord revenge our wrongs.' I think it a great pity, in such a land as this, that a *Christian* inscription was not chosen; it would then be quite a sermon to the passer-by. We entered Damascus by the East Gate, and rode through the city along the 'street that is called Straight,' from one end to the other. My companion explained to me of what a frail nature the houses were, their composition being of mud whitewashed, or some such soft material—indeed, so soft, that an entrance could soon be effected through their sides by simply inserting some sharp instrument and enlarging the hole. Such being the case, it must be most necessary to keep a good look-out by night for robbers, and always be ready for their reception. Robberies and breaking into houses within Damascus, I think, are not of frequent occurrence, and doubtless much of this kind of thing is prevented by its being generally known that fire-arms are kept ready for use. After wandering about and pushing our horses through the crowds of people that thronged the streets, we steered for the hotel, and shortly afterwards I parted from my kind good friend the missionary. He had taken quite an interest in showing me over the city, and giving me much information that I certainly should not have obtained had it not been for his kindness. The 'Protestant' mission has not been idle since its establishment in 1843; this could be seen by its fruits. It was commenced by two missionaries—one belonging to the Presbyterian Church of Scotland, and the other the Church of Ireland. The clergyman from Scotland soon left, and one from the Presbyterian Church of the United States took his place. And now behold the work! See the schools, and the numerous converts gained by

preaching the Word of God in Arabic and distributing books; and they (the missionaries) have also contributed greatly to the advance of education, and a taste for reading among a large section of the natives. All denominations of Moslems, Jews, and Christians have attended their schools, and bought and read their books. During the massacre the Mission church and schools were burnt; the Rev. William Graham, missionary, murdered; and the little community dispersed. The schools and church have been rebuilt, much of the building fund coming from a good charitable lady residing in England. The Protestant community seems to have gained, instead of having lost, strength by the cruel massacre. It is larger now than then. Of course I would that the work were Catholic. I may differ with many in my ideas, but it was impossible for me to see the great good that had been and was being done by this 'Protestant' mission preaching the love of Jesus, and educating comparative savages to be useful men and women. Let us in all charity render to them their due. I must now bid the mission farewell, ever praying that God will continue to strengthen and prosper their work; for is it not surely *His work?*

At dinner that evening we had four fresh arrivals. They looked as if they had just returned from a walk in Regent Street, instead of the enormous journey they had accomplished. The gentlemen were certainly sunburnt, but the ladies had preserved their complexions, which only seemed to bear the bright, rosy hue of health. The party consisted of papa and mamma, and son and daughter; and very nice they all were, and very talkative, as if they had enjoyed no other society for a long time than that of themselves, and were only too glad to meet with strangers and exchange a few ideas with them. Their really tremendous journey, or journeys, had been up the Nile and away in the desert to Mount Sinai, on to the top of the mountain, or one of the

peaks forming the range. Some years ago I saw this range when travelling up the Red Sea. Mounts Sinai and Horeb belong to the same range, and stand away in the heart of a vast and dreary desert. The travels of this family in the desert surprised me exceedingly. I once crossed a desert of about ninety miles of sand, and nothing could exceed the dreariness of the journey; but these people travelled hundreds of miles there, and were, I think they said, two months in it. Their mode of conveyance was on dromedaries, and must have been exceedingly slow. The progress of camels, I have heard, is on an average one and a-half miles an hour. The caravans I saw crossing the Egyptian desert I should imagine were going somewhat faster than that, but their pace was very sluggish. Our new acquaintances conveyed with them live stock into the desert, driving the sheep. The vast and dreary expanse of sand through which they passed is 'occupied for the most part by hordes of Arabs, who subsist by plunder, and render the road impassable, except for large and well-defended caravans.'[1] The height of the Sinai and Horeb range is 8,593 feet above the level of the sea; Mount Horeb forms part of the north end. On the north-east side of the range is a fortified convent dedicated to St. Catherine, tenanted by about twenty monks belonging to the Greek Church. The monks in this monastery were sent here, so the young lady informed me, for punishment for being 'naughty,' which I think was the innocent way she expressed herself; but, with all due deference to this very delightful and charming young lady, I do not wish to transfer this statement to my readers as information. Well, here were these wonderful people safe and sound in Damascus; they had ridden through Galilee, and so on. They had met with no accidents of a serious nature,

[1] Beeton.

having had but one or two falls. Only one woman, I understand, had ever reached Sinai before these two ladies. The mamma—I hope she will forgive my apparent rudeness in guessing at her age—I should say would be about forty; the daughter nineteen or twenty; the papa forty-eight or fifty, and the son eighteen or nineteen. The ladies' costumes were elegant and ladylike, the same as if they were in their own drawing-room. They were certainly full of conversation; but withal there was a quiet, pleasant, unassuming manner which made their acquaintance delightful. I shall ever look back upon my very short acquaintance with these people as an interesting little episode in my travels, and although they related their great doings without any boastful or high-flown language, it added to my wonder and doubts as to how it was really possible for them to have been where they said, and yet, wonderful and astonishing as it was, I doubted not their story for one instant. They were and are the most astonishing people of the kind I have ever met.

There was another wonder at the hotel—a young Englishman, who, I understood, was travelling quite by himself, sleeping and stopping at any place chance threw in his way. He had ridden from Bagdad (a city of Turkey in Asia) in an extraordinary short time; but his doings now seemed to dwindle down into comparative nothingness when placed by the side of those of the fresh arrivals.

I made the acquaintance of the young man who had taken the service on Sunday; he proved to be an American Presbyterian (I think) minister. I had the pleasure of some conversation with him.

The last day in Damascus has drawn to a close, and with it my story is fast doing the same. To-morrow we were to be called at 2·30 A.M., and quit the ancient city by diligence on our return journey to Beyrout. It was nearly 11 P.M. before my head was on the pillow. I was very tired; I

had been much on my feet during the day—had seen much and done much: all of which was tiring; indeed, all sight-seeing is very fatiguing. However, it is time to close the day's notes, so I wish all my readers a very good night.

CHAPTER VIII.

CONCLUSION.

My story is nearly told. I have had my 'say,' and lived over again, as it were, the one short month, the most eventful of my life—namely, that spent in Palestine and Syria—the reminiscences of which can never be effaced from the tablet of my memory. I would conclude here, but my story, perhaps, would not be quite complete if I did not conduct the reader, together with ourselves, safely back to Beyrout, and on board H.M.S. 'Trafalgar.'

We were *very effectually* called in the morning at about the same very early hour we had been at Beyrout when about to start for Damascus. The invalid I was glad to find better after the previous day's entire rest, and able to proceed on the journey. Breakfast was prepared, and we sat down to our early meal about 2·45 A.M. We (five of us, for the two American gentlemen were in our company) were in good time for the diligence. It was waiting at the Damascus Gate, and did not start until after 4 A.M. Streaks of daylight commenced to eclipse the stars soon after our backs were turned upon the ancient city, and the full burst of day illuminated the brilliantly green scenery as we drove along the pretty banks of the Abana. The morning was lovely and bright, and the atmosphere very clear; but as we drove smartly along, the wind blowing in our faces, and coming from the distant snow-clad mountains, struck very cold; so that, perched in our elevated seats in the banketta, we were glad to shut our-

selves in with the hansom-patent-safety kind of window. The plains of Damascus being some 2,000 feet above the level of the sea, the return journey is one hour or more shorter, and not so tedious. We reached Stora somewhat before noon, and found breakfast prepared, of which we partook with good appetites. The stipulated twenty or twenty-five minutes soon expired, and the horn sounded, so we had to hurry away to our seats. The gentleman passenger that occupied the third seat in the banketta had just returned from Baalbek: he was a young American, but apparently not much given to description; but he asserted the trip was 'very *re*-warding,' and one was left to make what he liked out of this not very voluminous description; and certainly any little information I may possess about the place was not gained from him. He had travelled through Palesteen, as he called it, by himself, and no doubt had seen much, but seemed little inclined generally to impart any of his experience. With Damascus he was greatly disappointed. I could hardly understand this, when we had been so delighted with the trip, and all we had seen. Of course I heard plenty about Baalbek from my shipmates when they returned on board. They also evidently considered the trip 'very *re*-warding,' but, unlike the Yankee, were profuse in their descriptions. The ride over the plains by the river Litany they said was lovely, and I could well believe it to be so from what I saw of both plains and river. The colossal blocks of stone used in the building caused wonderment and surprise. What mechanical force could possibly have been used in conveying from the quarries and raising to such heights these huge, massive blocks? was the unsolved problem. The remains of the great temple are a wonder indeed. The stones of the first tier above-ground consist of stones of various lengths; all of them are about twelve and a half feet thick, and the same in width. Over these come stones

of more than sixty-three feet long; the largest blocks, perhaps, that were ever placed in a wall by man, remarks Dr. Thompson. The great measuring master, if I may be permitted so to term him—Dr. Robinson—gives the dimensions of three of the stones; one is sixty-four feet long, another sixty-three feet eight inches, and the last one sixty-three feet. Thus, I think, we can form a pretty good estimate of their enormous magnitude. One of my shipmates showed me a photograph of the famous stone which is partially withdrawn from the quarry. It is *fourteen* by *seventeen*, and *sixty-nine* feet long. Dr. Thompson remarks 'that three very respectable rooms might be cut in it, and still leave partition walls three feet thick.' It is quite an unravelled mystery as to how such blocks could be conveyed over a mile of uneven ground to the temple, and then raised to their position on the platform. What *could* have been the mechanical forces used? It is also worthy of remark that these enormous masses of stone are squared so nicely, and polished so smoothly, that, as they lay one on the other, the exactitude of the fit is so wonderful, it is often very difficult to discover whether you are examining one or two stones; the joint must be searched for before found. Could the architects of the present day bring such huge and weighty masses of stone together with such astonishing nicety and exactitude that even the blade of a knife could not be inserted between the blocks? I was greatly interested by the various accounts given me, and could not help being disappointed that I had not 'fetched' these wonderful ruins myself, and personally inspected them. They have no biblical interest. Some of the remains, it seems, may claim greater antiquity than others, and are equal in age to anything in Egypt, which is saying much. Dr. Thompson asserts that 'the substructures of the great temple can scarcely be of a later age than that of Solomon, and *may* have supported a magni-

ficent edifice in the time of Joshua. If we reject this identification, what other name shall we or can we give to these wonderful ruins? I can think of none, and after travelling up and down and across that whole region for twenty-five years, and studying every ancient site in it, I find no other Baal-gad, and ask for none.' In reference as to how much evidence there is as to whether Solomon erected any of these temples at Baalbek, the learned Doctor goes on to say:—'The unanimous voice of Mahommedan romance and Oriental fable. . . . . That he should have had something to do with Baal-gad is, however, not incredible. His government included the Bŭkah; he was given to magnificent architecture; he built with great stones, quite equal, according to Josephus, to those in the substructures at Baalbek, and not much less, according to the Bible; and, finally, there is no other prince known to history to whom the most ancient parts can be ascribed with greater plausibility. If not this very Suleyman Bin Daoud of the Moslem, their author is absolutely unknown.' I need add no more about these very interesting ruins, which I have not seen, and more especially after having been enabled to lay before my readers the ample account furnished by Lieutenant Palmer.

By one o'clock we were ascending the second range of Lebanon, and were considerably above the plains of Cœle-Syria. The mountain-tops were clothed with snow of the purest white, and it was evident there had been a heavy fall since we crossed the range. Clouds were hovering about the peaks, and as time and ourselves advanced we occasionally passed through a thick mist, which as we gained in altitude increased in density, so that before long the whole view was veiled, and as we reached the summit it seemed as if we were in a London fog, so thick were the clouds through which we passed. At one time I feared we should have had to pull up altogether and wait for it to

clear a little ; for we could only see a few yards beyond the horses' heads, and the fear of suddenly finding ourselves hurled down some profoundly deep abyss would now and then present itself. It was almost beyond a joke passing through the clouds. My two companions did not care to face the thick atmosphere, and kept their heads and faces covered with coats. We must have been an hour or more passing through these dense vapours. The change was most welcome when, gradually as we descended, they were left above our heads. The view soon now became very imposing and grand, but of course not equal to that we had before witnessed on the mountain's summit, when not a cloud was visible, while journeying to Damascus. The Dog river ran away on our right towards the sea. The scenery of the place is simply enchanting; the wild gorge through which the stream runs clothed with luxuriant verdure, mingled with a wildness not very often seen even in Syria. As we descended the mountain the air became soft and bland, and warmer and still warmer. The Dog river issues from a cave in the mountain about six miles above the sea ; the scenery about its source is very romantic. The ancient Assyrian sculptures that remain at the Nahr-el-Kelb, or Dog river, are worthy of examination ; the coach-road passed at too great a distance to enable us to see any of this. Some of the officers from the ship visited the river on horseback, and returned much delighted with their excursion. Respecting this most beautiful stream, the 'Handbook for Syria and Palestine' makes a few interesting remarks, which are quoted in a note in the 'Land and the Book' :—'The Dog river is a romantic stream that flows from the Lebanon ridge into the sea a few miles north of Burût. Its old Roman name was Lycus flamen. "The origin of the name is hid by the mists of tradition. Some tell us that in the long-past ages, a monster of the wolf species was chained by some god or

demon at the river's mouth, which, when lashed to fury by the storms, awoke the echoes of far-distant Cyprus with his bark. . . . Another story is, that the statue of a dog formerly stood on the pedestal that crowns the cliff; its mouth being wide open, strange sounds were heard to issue from it when winds were high; these the Arabs long regarded as supernatural warnings of impending war, but at length, on one occasion, they mustered courage, assembled in a body, and hurled the monster into the sea.'' '

The view that we lost when outward bound from Beyrout, owing to the earliness of the hour, we were now able to enjoy. It certainly was not extensive when we reached the base of Lebanon, but was bright and cheerful, with thick mulberry orchards on either hand and stretching away for miles. The road was as good as any in England, and if it had not been for an occasional palm rearing his feathery head here and there, one might almost have considered himself back in the dear old country. But then I should not forget the carriages that passed by; there was a difference here '*in them*,' for not a single lady was to be seen in any of them—no gay female attire was there to enliven, nothing but the stolid faces of Turks with fezes. *This* was rather different to *our* public drives.

Well, our journey is over; we have been to Damascus and back, crossed and recrossed both Lebanons, and feel ourselves quite travellers. We arrived on board our ship in time for dinner. The Baalbek party had not yet returned, but all at various periods fetched into Beyrout next day.

On May 4 we bade Syria farewell, and stood out to sea 'homeward bound,' Consul-General Eldridge being on board, taking passage as far as Cyprus, where we remained a day or two. Calms and head winds much delayed us, and we only reached Crete about the middle of the month. Remaining there one day only, we proceeded to Malta; the

weather still being very calm, steam had to be used and sails furled, which enabled us to reach the island towards the end of May. Here very disappointing news awaited us. We were not to go straight home, but to proceed to Gibraltar, communicating on our way with H.M.S. 'Defence' at Algiers, having passengers and mails for that ship. At 'the Rock' we were to take on board 300 seamen, mariners, and boys for the Mediterranean squadron, and return to meet the Admiral at Sicily. This programme was somewhat altered when at Gibraltar, by telegram from the Admiralty, and we were directed to proceed to Corfu, some 400 or 500 miles further. We had been ordered by the Admiral of the Channel fleet, which was at Gibraltar, to communicate by signal with Malta in passing. This we did, and were answered by the signal, 'come into harbour;' here we coaled, and our orders were once again altered. A telegram had been received from the Admiral of the Mediterranean fleet at Corfu, saying that he had or was about to sail from thence. So we were directed to proceed to Navarino. Arriving in the Morea, we found the fleet had not arrived, and next day nothing was seen of them; but the following they made their welcome appearance, and relieved us of our living cargo.

Once more, then, we were 'homeward bound,' and those two words gladden many hearts. We were to return to Malta and be 'prompt,' using steam in calms and light head winds. At Malta invalids and naval passengers were embarked for passage to England, and off we again started with spread of canvas for Gibraltar, where we fell in with the 'flying squadron,' and received a further supply of invalids for home. Sailing from 'the Rock' the wind for a time was fair, but afterwards headed us, and for some days we encountered heavy weather with foul winds. On reaching the Bay of Biscay the winds once again favoured

us, and we sailed gaily away for England, reaching Portsmouth on the evening of Thursday, August 3.

I now bid you, my dear readers, farewell. It has afforded me great pleasure during this our long passage home from Beyrout to have re-travelled with you over spots which are so dear to me, and doubtless also to you; all things have an end; our story seemingly has been long in relating, but the tale is now told. Both myself and my friend, Lieutenant Palmer, are anxious to instil into our readers' minds that we are no authors, and have no pretensions that way. In conning over my manuscript, I find quotations from an author here and there, whose name I regret to have omitted; but regrets are useless now, as I no longer have in my possession books from which I derived much information, they having been lent to me by a gentleman at Gibraltar, to whom I have returned them. At the commencement of my little work I stated how I intended to go on the 'borrowing lay;' but still I trust and think by having done so I have been enabled to give information of value, and fill up what would have otherwise been hopeless blanks: and may I hope the authors from whom I have 'cribbed' will vouchsafe their forgiveness.

I am fully aware of there being an odd mixture in this book of pathetic and other writings, but you know 'all work and no play makes Jack a dull boy.' I have asked God to bless my undertaking; and how more than repaid I shall be if, by anything said herein, the spark of love in some one breast is fanned into a flame for the dear Lord who loves us so well. From the ground we have travelled over having been so often traversed long before we were blessed by being permitted to tread its sacred soil, I cannot expect a wide range for these pages; but I trust they will be found to contain records of some value in after years to my messmates and travelling companions. I thank God that among them are some true Christians, and

I earnestly pray to Him to grant that they may continue the fight successfully and endure on to the end, and that we may be the means in His hands of bringing many straying sheep into His fold. Often have we met week after week against many difficulties to sing His praises and ask His help in our feeble efforts; and now that possibly we are about to separate, let us still continue our united prayers for God's blessing on the 'Trafalgar's Prayer Union,' ever clinging to Him as our firm and only stay.

Dear general reader, I thank you for your kind attention. I hope you have met with some interest and amusement in these pages; the return for any little labour and trouble they have caused me is nought in comparison of what I ask in return—I ask for your prayers.

Again, farewell! and permit me to subscribe myself, your faithful friend,

THE AUTHOR.

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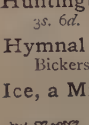

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